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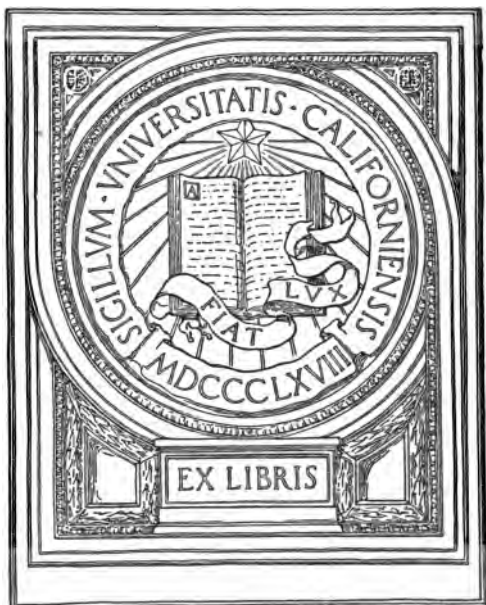
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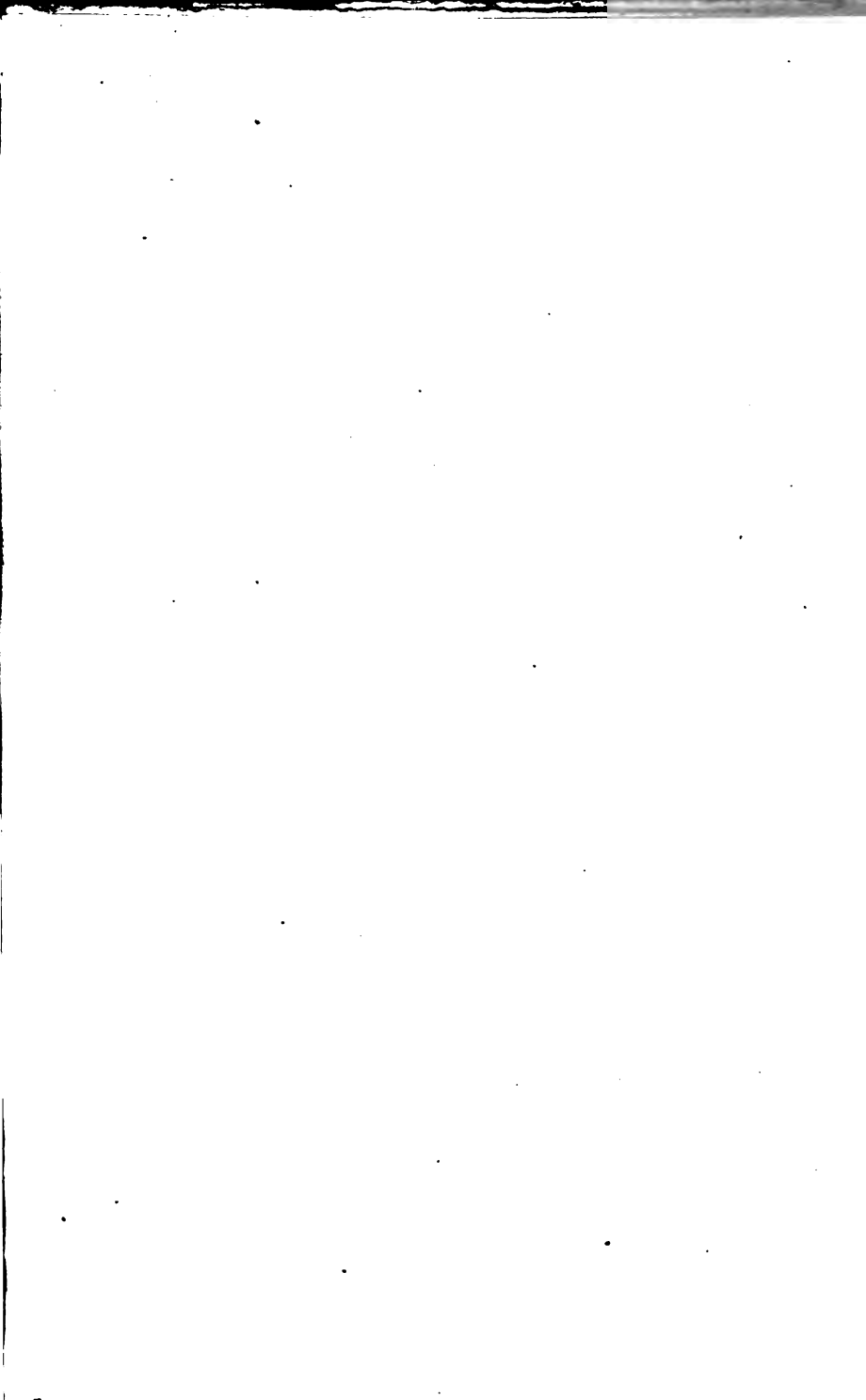
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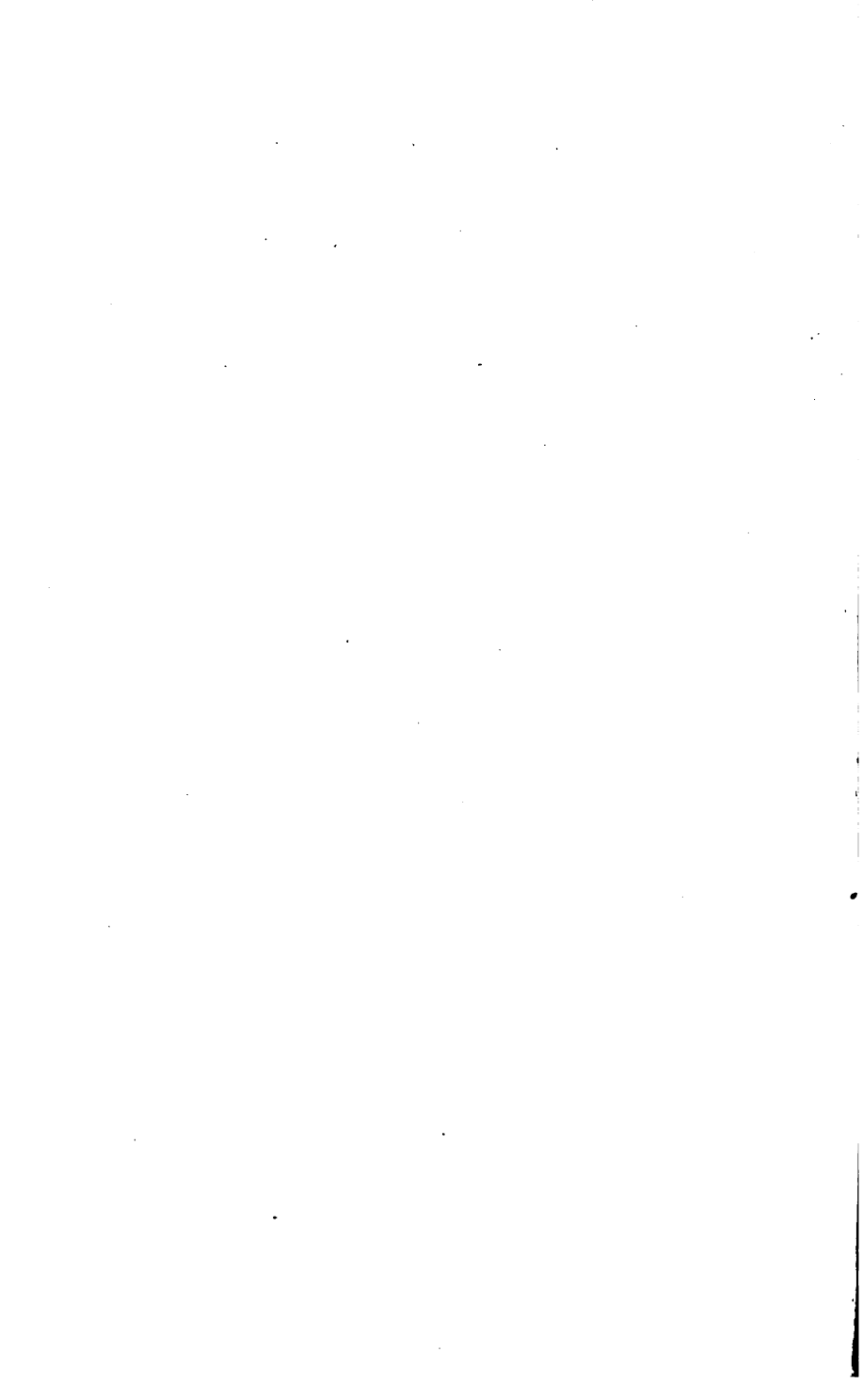


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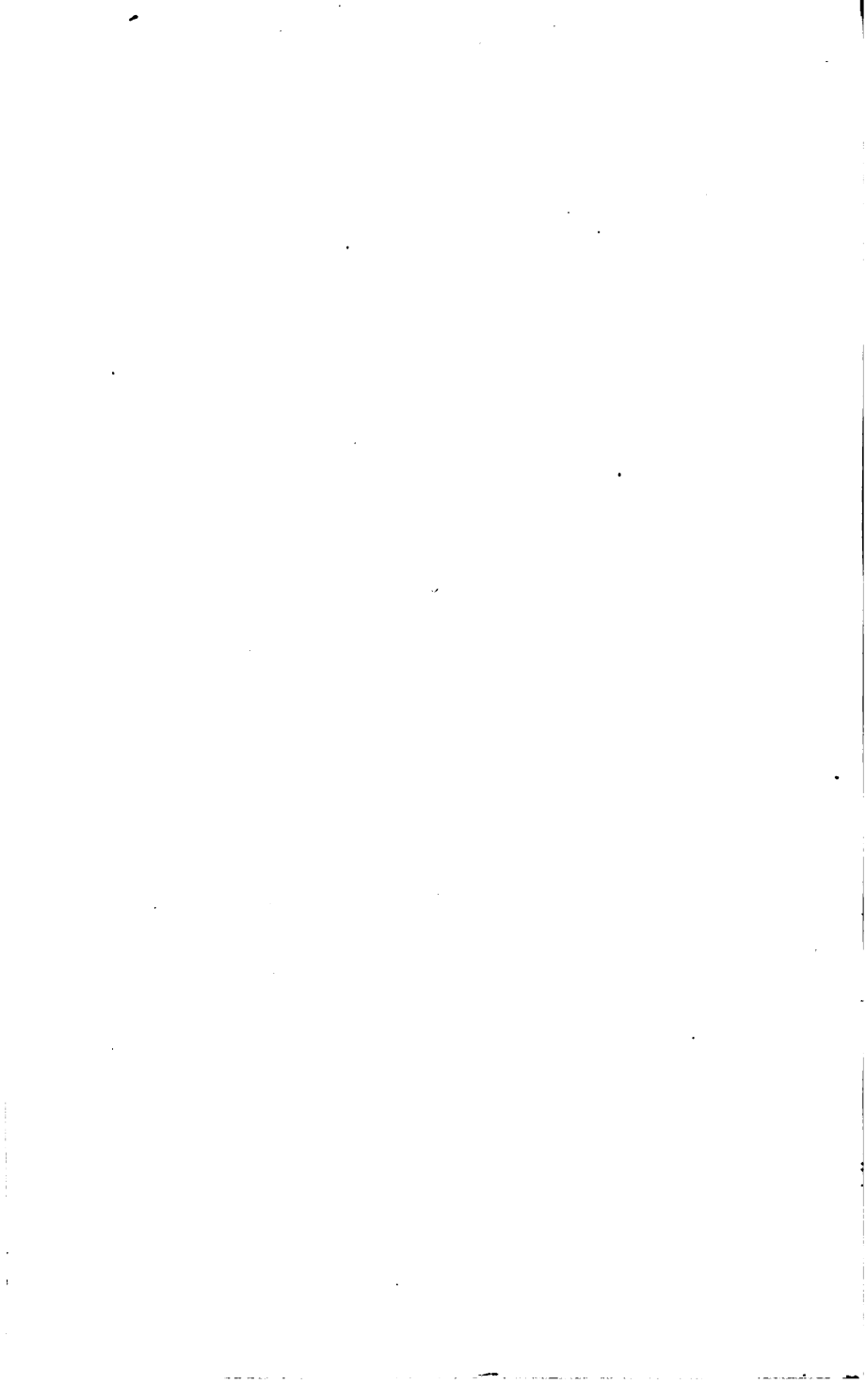




N O U R M A H A L .



Y O L . I I I .



N O U R M A H A L,

An Oriental Romance.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

BY MICHAEL J. QUIN,

AUTHOR OF "A STEAM VOYAGE DOWN THE DANUBE,"
"A VISIT TO SPAIN," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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N O U R M A H A L.



CHAPTER I.

Tell him the balmy breath of spring
Hath waked from winter sleep
The hills and vales ;—that on the wing
In airy circles sweep
The blithesome birds from tree to tree,
Sweet minstrels of the grove !
Oh ! bid him feel their ecstasy,
But tell not that I love !

Tell him the primrose now is seen
On every bank and brae ;
That all the fields look gaily green
Beneath the cloudless day.
Hark ! the brooks murmur as they fall,
Soft as the turtle-dove !
Oh ! how these scenes the past recall !
But tell not that I love !

Tell him that now in every dale,
 Beneath the hawthorn shade,
The shepherd woos, with artless tale,
 The fond believing maid.
All nature smiles, and I alone
 A sense of sadness prove ;
Oh ! bid him come ere Spring be gone,
 But tell not that I love !

STORY-TELLER OF CASHMERE.

It would be vain to deny that the presence of the young prince inspired the gay equestrians, amongst whom he rode towards the fortress of Kebeer, (as old Chunder called the subah's castle,) with a more than ordinary degree of animation. Besides Nourmahal's special attendants, or rather companions, for as such she usually treated those whose duty it was to render her personal service, all the ladies of the harem happened to have been out with her upon this occasion. They had expressed an ardent curiosity to see the hermit, concerning whom Kanun had told them every thing she had heard from her mistress—and rather something more, for she, led on by her fertile imagination, ascribed to Zeinedeen many magical attributes to which he made no sort of pretension.

It was unfortunate for the purpose of his light-hearted visitors, that Nourmahal did not find the sage in a mood in which she could have thought of asking him to admit them to his presence. She had access to his tower under all circumstances, for he felt so deep an interest in her fortunes, that he was never unprepared to receive her, or unwilling to afford her the consolation and advice which the peculiarity of her situation required.

On more than one occasion expressions of almost paternal affection towards her escaped his lips. Kazim's name, too, he mentioned, as if it had been long familiar to him. To the surprise of Nourmahal, he appeared fully acquainted with the history of her family, from Kazim's first entrance into the college of Ulug Beg, to his elevation to the highest civil office of the empire. He moreover informed her that both her parents had, by the order of the emperor, set out for Cashmere, but he feared that they were summoned to the emperor's presence for no good purpose. He suspected that Bouchari intended to use them as instruments for promoting his design, in some way or other, to obtain possession of prince Chusero.

This intelligence was at once the source of joy and alarm to the mind of Nourmahal. Scarcely any event could have been more delightful to her, than the arrival in Cashmere of those whom she loved with all the tenderness of the only affection, that never in her bosom was mingled with pain. But the dimly shadowed suspicions of Zeinedeen filled her with anticipations of evil, which the immediate approach of the imperial troops was by no means calculated to diminish.

It happened, that while Nourmahal was with the hermit, breathing all her anxiety upon this subject, three foreign, and very remarkable-looking persons were admitted into his chamber, with whom he at once entered into discussions that seemed to have been going on for some days, as topics were frequently alluded to, on which Zeinedeen and the strangers appeared to have already agreed. The latter spoke in the Persian language, with an accent novel to the ear of Nourmahal, but with an elegance of idiom which, combined with the extraordinary statements they made, won her for the moment from her own thoughts.

The strangers had the crowns of their heads

closely shaved, a wreath of hair being still preserved, which, broken only over the forehead, fell gracefully towards the back and shoulders. Upon the eldest of the three, who was named Aquaviva, the lapse of more than seventy years appeared to have left few traces beyond the silvery lustre of his locks. Monserrate and Euriquez, his companions, were much younger. Their countenances, of the noble European mould, and browned by the sun of Hindostan, through which they had recently travelled, exhibited a degree of lofty resolution, and, at the same time, of angelic sweetness, which at once fixed Nourmahal's attention. They were arrayed in long flowing garbs of white camlet, cinctured at the waist by black woollen cords, from which depended beads of an ebony colour, having attached to them silver medals impressed with the portrait of a saint, whom they called the Virgin, and crucifixes of the same material, bearing the outstretched figure of a divine sufferer, whom they styled the Messiah. When they first entered the hermit's chamber their heads were enveloped in cowls, which they drew back upon their mantles in making their obeisance. Their feet were sandalled.

Zeinedeen was not unwilling that Nourmahal should hear the tidings these interesting strangers came to announce. They spoke of a land that once flowed with milk and honey, and contained a people the peculiar favourites of the High God, amongst whom this Messiah was born—amongst whom he spent his life—teaching them doctrines of the most sublime description. But while he was yet an infant they sought his death, and not being able to discover him, they slew innocents without number, filling their beauteous cities with mourning, in order that he should not escape their unprovoked vengeance. To his words, when he grew up, they would not listen; and when wonders, such as earth had never witnessed before—a voice from the skies—the leper suddenly cleansed—the incurable restored to health—the dead to life—doctrines which no mind merely human could have conceived, bore in letters of light, testimony to his origin and his mission—the very people who ought to have been the first to love and worship him, condemned him to crucifixion!

Nourmahal's heart wept as Aquaviva unfolded the history of the Holy One represented on his

beads. She expressed a strong desire to learn more upon the subject, but the advancing day, and the recollection that the ladies of the harem were waiting below, prevented her from prolonging her visit.

That group of fair equestrians, take them all in all, when joined by Nourmahal, formed as lovely a cavalcade as the eye of a warrior could desire to rest upon. Some three or four were originally captives, who had become the property of Afkun by right of war, during the civil contests which had taken place in Cashmere. Others he had purchased from the masters of caravans passing through the country, with a view to protect them from the tyranny of their owners, of whose conduct towards them they had but too much reason to complain. They were almost all Georgian or Mingrelian females; scarcely inferior to those of Circassia in gracefulness of figure, or purity of complexion, and more than equal to them in liveliness of temper and quickness of intelligence.

The single passion by which the heart of the subah was engrossed, left him but a slight fund of affection for the secondary ornaments of his establishment. It was a necessary part of his

state, as viceroy, to have his harem filled with bright-eyed damsels. To a generous soul like his, it was no small gratification to have the means of affording a safe and agreeable home to females, whose exposure to vicissitude and suffering became only more imminent, in proportion to the beauty by which they were distinguished.

Amongst all his cares and griefs, Afkun never forgot what was due to the happiness even of the lowliest of those inmates of his household. He cherished them for their very dependence upon him. All that he knew of love,—the deepest, the tenderest, that ever fired the pulse of man,—he consecrated to Nourmahal. He gave it the more, the more he was forsaken; for hope still lent a gleam of sunshine even to his visions of despair. But, at the same time, he continued uniformly to discharge, with the utmost delicacy and kindness, his duties towards all those who were under his protection. They felt and returned his beneficence. They beheld, without jealousy, the unequivocal homage which he paid to his principal consort; they even sympathized in those sufferings which his heart silently sustained;

and their only rivalry with each other was to see who should best succeed, by gaiety of manner, by composition of new airs or dances, or dramatic amusements, to beguile him of that despondency to which his noble spirit seemed a predestined victim.

Nevertheless, as they rode along,—so natural is coquetry to the sex,—they were not insensible, as many a side-glance and playful smile could tell, to the martial bearing of the young prince, who now commanded their escort. Some pitied him for his misfortunes; some could not help admiring him for the reports they had heard of his valour; others thought it but right to yield him the allegiance of their hearts, as the person best entitled, in the subah's opinion, to the crown of Hindostan. For some reason or other, or no reason at all, the language of admiration was eloquent in every eye. Girths never before had such a propensity to loosen, or whips to fall; or ponies, hitherto as quiet as the caged dove, to discharge themselves of their tremulous burthens. It was the prerogative of the prince to compose their alarms; his highness had abundant work on his hands,

to pay, on all sides, the attentions which the exigencies of each moment demanded.

Afkun, riding by the side of Nourmahal, could well afford to smile at these little accidents. Although she appeared more than usually reserved, (the intelligence about her beloved parents,—the tidings of the strange derishes,—the unexpected meeting with the emperor, might well have made her so,) still for Afkun it was enough to know that he was so near to the star of his existence. There was something even in the checked pacing of his proud Arabian, moving step for step with her favourite palfrey, which afforded him pleasure. He spoke cheerfully of the strong defences of the castle, which he pointed out to Nourmahal as they approached that fortress. He showed her that its heights were domineered by no others within the reach of the most powerful artillery ; that no hostile force could attempt to cross the moat by which it was surrounded, without being exposed to instant destruction, and that the idea of scaling the mural precipices which ascended from the moat to the citadel would be insanity, even if all other difficulties had been overcome. What pangs would not have rent the bosom of

that animated soldier, had he known how lightly his observations fell upon the heart to which they were addressed, and that other words, of more than magic power, were still breathing round it a music that turned all other sounds adrift upon the empty air !

Behind Nourmahal, however, rode a maid,—that pale Circassian,—for whom no look, no word that escaped the subah was ever lost, when she was within its influence. Nothing, perhaps, would have surprised Kanun so much as to be told by some lynx-eyed observer of her conduct, that however contented she felt in the presence of her mistress, to whom she was affectionately attached, she might have been said to live only when breathing the same atmosphere with Afkun. He was indeed the sun in whose rays her liliated countenance unfolded all its natural charms. But, ah ! that sun, she often thought to herself, was so far above her reach, that beyond the delight of contemplating it often from her humble station, she conceived no hope.

The subah never had the slightest cause for suspecting this tender and silent love. As the handmaid of her to whom he was so utterly

devoted, she was always pleasing in his sight. So was any tree or plant which Nourmahal preferred. So was any bird she fed from her own hand, or any prospect of the scene around, which she thought particularly beautiful. He could not indeed but have observed the diligence with which Kanun always arranged his toilet, placing in the vases of his cabinet those flowers which she knew he liked best, because they were favourites of Nourmahal, and preparing for his use napkins fringed by her own skill with gold, and perfumed with the most grateful essences. All these attentions he marked with delight, because he hoped that they were suggested by Nourmahal. It never occurred to him that they might have emanated from any other source.

Kanun believed it to be her province, to busy herself as much as possible in every thing of a domestic nature that related to the subah. She kept the keys of his ward-robe—was always the first to enter his cabinet after he quitted it—often rested her head, and gave free scope to sighs, to tears, on the cushion still warm with his breath after his noon-tide slumber. She suffered no hand but her own to gather up the

fine linen he had just left off. It exhaled a fragrance that revived the fading bloom of her heart. But, affected as she was by all these symptoms of an unchangeable, adoring, passion, she dared not to confess even to her most secret reflections, that existence would for her have no value, if Afkun were no more.

Nobody who had beheld that gay and gallant cavalcade crossing the drawbridge of the castle, would have supposed that they were entering a species of prison, in which, according to all probability, they were likely to be strictly enclosed for months to come. With the exception of the viceroy and his consort, all looked as cheerful as the open day. The prince, full of the ardour of youth, entered into the playful sallies of his fair companions, with unrestrained glee, carefully preserving himself, however, within the limits of that decorous familiarity, which, as a guest of the subah, it was incumbent upon him not to violate. The least transgression, in this respect, would have at once solved every bond between them. Omrah, prince, or emperor, whatever the rank, or power, of the man, received within the door, be to him sacred the treasures of the harem, or his blood

must answer for it. Upon this point our laws, our feelings of honour, know no exception or indulgence. The harem we defend at the peril of all things,—wealth, station, glory, life, a thousand lives if we possessed them.

CHAPTER II.

Oh! that I were a shepherd boy,
Upon some green hill side;
Fair flocks and herds my only joy,
A pipe my only pride!
Then far from war and thee I'd stray
In search of peace alone,
Courting the shade the live-long day,
Unknowing and unknown.

The birds that with sweet rapture greet
The morn, my mates would be;
And ocean murmuring at my feet,
Would lend its minstrelsy
To soothe the anguish of this breast,
That once lived on thy smile,
Nor feared, while in its sunshine blest,
'Twas meant but to beguile!

But no,—I ne'er shall thee accuse,
Thy heart no falsehood stains:
'Twas Fancy gave thy cheek those hues,
That held my soul in chains.

Forget thy vow—the heaven I felt,
Believing thou wert mine ;
And think the valley where we knelt,
A visionary shrine !

STORY-TELLER OF CASHMERE.

THE drawbridge being passed by the whole party, was, on the instant, raised by the warders of the castle, one of whom stated to Afkun, in a low voice, that not only the van-guards, but the imperial troops, had been just seen from the watch-tower, descending the mountains, and approaching rapidly towards the capital.

“ Oh ! thanks to Allah ! ” exclaimed Nourmahal, who over-heard the communication.

The warder looked no less astonished than the subah, who controlled his feelings, however, until having alighted, he assisted his consort to dismount, and conducted her to her chamber.

“ What am I to understand, Nourmahal, from these words you have just uttered ? ”

“ That I am transported with the hope of soon again beholding my beloved parents ! ”

Afkun had not seen Nourmahal betray so much emotion, since the morning she quitted Agra. He could not comprehend it. It came

upon him as if a thunder-cloud broke upon his head.

“ Yes, Afkun—my parents—your friends—they are, or will speedily be with the army. Zeinedeen has informed me so; and may Allah grant that my father’s presence, his unflinching wisdom, his just influence with both the contending parties, may bring these dire contests to a peaceable issue!”

“ I was not prepared for this. The high chancellor, Kazim;—he, indeed, whom I have never ceased to love—he, Nourmahal, who placed this hand in mine—if any power on earth can subdue the malice of Bochari—can extinguish that torch which has set the empire in conflagration—it must be Kazim.”

“ Wonder then no longer, Afkun, at my feelings of joy.”

“ I share them with you; nothing could happen which would afford me much greater happiness than to receive within our gates those two beloved sources of your existence, by you scarcely more beloved than by me.”

Nourmahal, in the flush of happiness that lightened in her countenance, thanked her husband with one of those heavenly smiles, for

which, were it his to bestow, he would have given the empire of the world.

“ Oh! cherished one,” he exclaimed, folding his arm round her waist, and looking in fixed rapture upon her glowing cheek—“ Oh! Nourmahal—should it be Kazim’s fortune, by his sage counsels to terminate this war, consistently with the just rights of the prince, and the interests of the empire—say that we shall retire from these turmoils of lofty station, and take up our abode in some solitude, where we shall thenceforth live only for each other! Promise me but this—and for myself I shall demand no other terms.”

“ My hand is your’s, Afkun. You know who it was that surrendered it to your care. Never—I truly believe—never was a wife more beloved than I have been—than I am!—beloved much—far beyond my deserts”——

“ That, Nourmahal, were impossible.”

“ You have often—too often,” she added, turning away her eyes, “ felt the insensibility with which I have met your affection—that affection ever to me the same—ever generous—ever ardent. Forgive, Afkun, these tears

—they rush from all the fountains of my soul”——

“They are natural—sacred. The hope of seeing again, and soon, those whom we both so truly love”——

“Would that that were the only cause!”

“You feel no alarm for the safety of the high chancellor?”

“None—no—no. Oh, these unbidden witnesses!—they will reveal all!” exclaimed Nourmahal, endeavouring to check the tears that flooded her cheek.

Afkun trembled, fearful that some dreadful disclosure was coming. He led Nourmahal to the divan; sitting by her, he took her hand in his, and repeatedly kissing it, besought her to be comforted.

“Alas! speak not thus to me—no kind word passes your lips that is not a barbed arrow to my soul.”

“I have no suspicions, Nourmahal, of your honour—but if”——

“Say it at once—if you thought me false to you”——

“Ah, if that calamity be mine, Afkun has no further occupation in this world!”

“ You would plunge your knife here ?”

“ Allah be my witness that I would freely pour out all my blood for you—be your guilt what it may !”

“ Had you tendered me the poisoned bowl, I could now drain it to the dregs !”

“ Oh ! why did I not perish at Lahore ? Why on the battle-field was there no sepulchre for me ?”

“ It is I—it is I—that should not have seen this day !”

“ It is gone—the light of my heart—for ever ! A hope—I will confess it—was growing there that when these contentions were over, I should abandon all pursuits of glory, and fly to some mountain home, where, dedicated entirely to thee, Nourmahal, by thee solely cherished in return, we should yield all our remaining days to the repose of well-trying affection. That vision which has cheered me through many a weary hour—which nerved my arm, and fired my soul in moments of desperate engagement—which even forbade me to remember the marks of indifference from thee that sometimes forced themselves on my attention—that enchanting vision is no more. Oh, Allah !” exclaimed the

subah, rising and wringing his hands together in frantic grief—" Oh, spirit of justice!—of benevolence, for such thou must be, who rulest the world—what have I done to deserve this terrible penalty at thy hands? Nourmahal faithless to me?"—

" Understand all my guilt—but not more. Your rights as my consort—my honour as your wedded wife—remain, and ever shall remain to the last moment of my life inviolate."

Afkun heard this declaration, made in the emphatic and dignified tone of innocence, with a manifest sense of joy. A gleam of light flashed from his livid face.

" Repeat those words—they bring back the ebbing current to my heart."

" The daughter of the house of Ayas—I will add, the wife of Sherè Afkun—knows too well the respect she owes to her family, to her honoured lord, to herself, to incur any guilt that would degrade her in her own, or in their esteem."

" Spoken like an Ayas. Oh Heaven, I thank thee that I have lived to hear these words, happen what may! What then is there, Nourmahal, which I cannot endure—cannot forgive?"

“ That which I dare not disclose to thee now, Afkun. Leave me. I am in agony.”

“ Ah, the fatal truth is now before me! I read it in those tears.—The sultan!”——

“ I am, indeed, betrayed. You now know that which I have long endeavoured to conceal—the fate against which I have struggled, but which my woman’s strength has not been sufficient to subdue. It is written in the books of Heaven against me.”

The warrior of a hundred fields—the slayer of the lion and the tiger—he who by his single arm rescued a besieged town from a host of invaders—and tore up the mound that turned a river from its course—fell breathless as the still-born babe beneath the withering sound of these words.

Nourmahal shrieked in alarm, fearful that the noble spirit had departed. Kanun was instantly with her. Beholding the subah fallen on the floor,—Nourmahal on her knees, —her cheeks pale,—her hands endeavouring to open his, which were still clasped,—her lips uttering incoherent cries,—the trembling maid knew not for a moment what to do. Instinctively hastening to her own room, she

returned with vases of spikenard and vinegar, which she poured upon Afkun's temples, rubbing them with all her force. Then kindling frankincense, she held it to the channels of his breath, while some of her companions, whom she called to her assistance, bore away Nourmahal to her bed-chamber. The affectionate Circassian, baring the feet of the subah, directed others to anoint them in hot oil, while she continued, until her strength was exhausted by her often-renewed exertions, to increase the nearly subsided pulse of life which she still felt in his veins. It grew stronger by degrees. The lips trembled and received again the colour of health. The eye-lids opened, and the spirit within them looked out, apparently in search of an object no longer to be seen.

"She is gone!" said Afkun, with a sob of anguish that seemed to rend his bosom; "she is gone from me. We meet no more here!"

Kanun, kneeling down by her master, gently raised his head, and prevailed upon him to taste a little sherbet. The pressure of his hand upon her burning forehead told her how much he thanked her for her services. He held her still near him. Her hair being dishevelled by her

exertions, he kindly parted it, and gazed for a moment on those eyes all beaming upon him with confessions, which fell like drops of evening upon the parched flower.

“There is, at all events,” he said, in a melancholy voice, “one being who loves Afkun. Be it thine, Kanun, to preserve the urn in which my ashes shall soon be enclosed. I desire for it no other monument than this faithful lap, in which my head is now laid. Open the sepulchre sometimes,—speak to me, and let a tear witness that you love your master. Be faithful to me while you live; it will be some consolation to my afflicted spirit. And when your hour is come, let them deposit your remains with mine.”

The subah, rising gently, extricated himself from the arms of the weeping girl, who, lost to every recollection save that of her love so long suppressed, so unexpectedly recognised beyond the highest hope she had ever allowed herself to cherish, continued on the carpet as if she feared to lose the position in which she had the double happiness of restoring her lord to life, and of receiving from him permission to cherish, even beyond the grave, the only idol of her soul.

It was a bequest which she would not have exchanged for a sceptre. Love never before obtained such a reward. She was inspired with the presentiment that she might be summoned, before many hours elapsed, to perform the office assigned to her, an office fraught with pangs of unutterable grief, but of grief made sacred to her by affection,—of grief dearer to her than any joy,—of grief destined, sooner or later, to seal upon them both the same tomb,—their bridal bed,—the nuptial bower, where they were never to separate!

Afkun ascended the watch-tower of the citadel, and plainly observed drawn scymitars and spear-heads flashing in the sun, through clouds of dust, in the direction of the pass through which masses of cavalry could alone enter Cashmere. Their appearance was not necessary to confirm the dark forebodings with which his mind was filled, although his reason was convinced that, in a military point of view, his position was impregnable.

Accompanied by the prince, he walked several times round the ramparts, examined the guns planted on them, sounded the fidelity of the men who formed the garrison, inspected the

fountains, the stores of rice, corn, and ammunition, took into his own possession the keys of the inner gate, between which and the portcullis, now firmly secured, the chains of the draw-bridge were coiled up. He felt satisfied that he was prepared for a blockade, not of months, but of years, if the enemy thought fit to persevere so long ; as to any other species of hostility, he gave it not a moment's reflection.

Nothing which had occurred would, however, prevent him from sending a messenger to the emperor, with letters for Kazim Ayas and Mangeli, inviting them to the castle, and proposing a truce during the period they might have permission to remain there. Having informed Nourmahal of his intention upon this point, and letters from both, addressed to the high chancellor, under cover to Jehangire, having been placed in the hands of an officer, the latter, escorted by twenty spearmen, with their shields upon their backs, set out for the encampment of the imperial army.

CHAPTER III.

The islands saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were astonished; they drew near and came.

THE ROYAL PROPHET.

CHUNDER'S announcement of the approach of the emperor suspended the conference, in which the hermit was engaged with the three foreign dervishes. Zeinedeen, as well as his visitors, were fully apprised of the entry of the imperial army into the province, but they were not prepared to behold the sovereign, in the simple attire of a Himalayan hunter. The hermit received Jehangire with every token of respect, assuring him that, although unescorted, beneath his roof the son of Acbar—of a master whom he loved and honoured for his

virtues, his matchless valour, his devotion to the welfare of all his people, to whatever religious sect they belonged, his munificent patronage of learned men, and his selection for the great offices of state of persons entitled to them by their integrity and talents—was secure from every danger, and welcome to all the hospitality, however humble, which that roof could afford.

Jehangire was affected by the warm-hearted reception which he experienced from the hermit. The three strangers were about to make their obeisances, when the emperor interposed, and saying in a familiar way that as he was at present nothing more than a pilgrim, they must treat him as such. Probably they were proceeding also to the temple of Mahadeo, and would permit him to accompany them.

Aquaviva confessed that he and his companions were indeed, as the emperor conjectured, pilgrims; but that their homage was due to other shrines, in which the presence of the divinity depended upon no time or season.

Auzeem remarked the courtly, yet simple and earnest manner in which the stranger uttered these words, and drawing Jehangire aside, in-

formed him in a low voice that he believed these persons to be the missionaries from the country of the Franks, who had obtained a license from his majesty not long since to visit Hindostan. The emperor, expressing his satisfaction at having thus encountered them, questioned them on that point. They immediately produced the imperial rescript to which Auzeem alluded, and expressed their happiness on being so unexpectedly placed in the imperial presence.

Jehangire prided himself, and not altogether unjustly, upon his acquaintance with the theological points of difficulty, that formed the principal subjects of controversy among the diversified sects with which his empire abounded. He was, therefore, strongly disposed to enter at once upon the discussion of the doctrines which the strangers came to inculcate. But Aquaviva, feeling that the great object he had in view might be endangered, by embarking at the moment in an argument with the emperor, humbly sought permission to wait upon his majesty at some more favourable season, when his mind would be relieved from the pressure of the civil war.

The hermit took the same view; but the em-

peror, remarking that topics of this description were to him a favourite source of recreation, fixed that the missionaries should attend him in the camp the following day. He then gave them leave to withdraw ; but as his curiosity to learn the species of faith which they professed was strongly excited, he requested, after their departure, that Zeinedeen would enlighten him on that subject. The hermit expressed his readiness to obey the emperor's desire, though he felt scarcely competent to unfold so mighty a theme, as he had been enabled to catch only a faint glimmering of it from the communications of the strangers.

“ But, sire,” he continued, “ I have heard enough from those holy men—for such I believe them to be—to convince my mind that they come amongst us with tidings of no common character. When I look upwards and behold in the midst of night the numberless worlds by which this small planet is surrounded, I am astonished at the immeasurable affection which the Great Spirit must bear to the beings whom he has placed here, if it be true, as these messengers declare, that he has sent hither, not a seraph, nor an archangel, but a God, to open to

us the path by which we are to ascend to his presence!"

"The books of the sibyls, and the traditions of all ages," observed Jehangire, "abound in predictions upon this subject. Mahomet applied them to himself; but I must confess that I have never been able to satisfy my understanding as to the propriety of his claims."

"The strangers," pursued Zeinedeen, "have produced to me books of unquestionable antiquity, of which it is manifest that the Koran is little more than a paraphrase."

"I had an opportunity of seeing in Persia," remarked Auzeem, "the writings to which you allude. The plagiarisms of the prophet are palpable."

"It is now about sixteen centuries ago, as these foreigners say, since three or four sages, skilled in the science of the heavens, while engaged in contemplating the myriads of lights that glow in those happy regions, beheld an orb of singular lustre suddenly descend from the utmost heights of space. It then moved in the direction of the Great Sea, and the sages, struck with admiration of its wonderful beauty, as well as with a profound impression that it was the

herald of some supernatural event, followed it in its course, until it stopped over an obscure village near Jerusalem. On their way they inquired of some shepherds, who were keeping the night watches over their flocks, whether any great king was lately born in that country ; but before the shepherds could give any answer to their questions, they were all encompassed by a canopy of fire, which could have been no other than the brightness of God. The air was filled with breathings of incomparable harmony, while in the canopy were seen hosts of angelic forms, whose voices proclaimed the birth of an infant, come to redeem mankind from the penalty which their early disobedience to the Supreme One would otherwise have entailed upon them. ‘ Glory, therefore,’ sung the heavenly host, ‘ be to God in the highest, and peace to men of good will !’ ”

“ I would have given my empire,” exclaimed Jehangire, “ to have heard those sounds.”

“ Following the course indicated by the star, the sages and the shepherds entered a cave that had been commonly used as a stable, and there they found laid in a manger, wrapped in bands of coarse linen, a child newly born. They wor-

shipped him, declaring all that they had heard, and made him offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

“ The Jewish authorities, fearful that the end of their power was come, sought the destruction of the infant ; but he was taken into Egypt, where he was preserved from their hatred. Returning afterwards to Syria, he spent his early years in retirement amongst the mountains and by the sea of Tiberias, whose lonely shores he seems to have loved with a particular affection. The humble fishermen, who frequented its waters, were his chosen companions. To them he imparted his doctrines, and confided the propagation of the faith which he came to establish.”

“ This is strange, seeing that his first worshippers were sages,” said Auzeem.

“ Every thing about this visitor of our planet was wonderful. He appears, throughout the whole of his life here, to have been raised above all men, not by the display of any symbol of authority, but by his invariable meekness and humility. The single word LOVE, embraced the whole of his religion—love for the Highest God, of whom the angels sung—love for men

to whom they announced the tidings of his perpetual peace.

“ Many events above the course of nature bore witness to the origin and mission of this Teacher. Persons troubled with evil demons he rescued from their sufferings ; by a word he raised the dead to life, stilled the tempest, gave language to the dumb, and hearing to the deaf, and blood to the withered hand, and vision to the faded eye. He walked upon the foaming waves of the sea. He passed, unseen, through multitudes. He fed thousands upon a small basket of fish and bread, and still abundant fragments remained after they were satisfied. While he was inculcating his doctrine, on one occasion, amidst his chosen ministers, upon the summit of a mountain, his face was suddenly illuminated, and his garments became whiter than the snow. Two of the patriarchs of the elder days descended from heaven, and conversed with him upon the approaching termination of his career upon earth. They were succeeded by a cloud, from which the Great Spirit spoke, declaring the Messiah to be his Son, and commanding obedience to his precepts.

“ One would think, that after such evidence

as these events furnished to the character of the Holy One, the generation of that day, at all events, would have unanimously accepted him as their master, and loved him as their mediator. On the contrary, they gave no belief to the awful signs of his office; they despised his admonitions, ridiculed him as an impostor, and finally sacrificed him to the jealousy of their priesthood. The sun shrouded itself while the mob of Jerusalem nailed him to a cross. The dead looked out from their sepulchres, disturbed by the woe which convulsed all nature. But for that act, the haughty city, whose palaces and temples glittered as the fairest then upon earth, soon after became a heap of ruins, which it still remains, and the descendants of that mob have been scattered through all nations, never to be re-united until they repent them of their crime."

"I have often remarked those Hebrews," said the emperor, "in the bazaars at Agra. Their countenances betray them as an outlawed race. They never look composed. There are traces of agitation on the quivering lip and the heated cheek, which have always made me

look at them, I knew not why, with suspicion, as if they had been fugitive murderers."

"He, the crucified, in three days arose from his tomb, and after repeating to his ministers all that he had previously taught them, ascended to the bright regions whence he came."

"This is, in truth," observed Auzeem, "a marvellous narrative. We have, in Hindostan, a variety of traditions which evidently relate to the Syrian prophet; and several of our poets even assure us, that there are nights so perfectly clear and calm, as to disclose the path of light by which he trod through the stars on his way to his heavenly abode."

"But the greatest wonder of all, as it seems to me," pursued the hermit, "is the rapid and secure progress which the new doctrine made through many nations. The ministers of the Messiah were all of them, without exception, poor and uneducated men. But a Spirit is said to have descended upon them, before they went forth to teach, which fired their hearts with indomitable fortitude, and endowed their tongues with every language. These inspired priests, without the aid of torch or sword, overthrew myriads of idols, and substituted in their shrines

the cross. The sanguinary and superstitious rites to which men had been accustomed they abolished, and in their room they established an unbloody sacrifice, and a system of worship the most pure, the most spiritual and exalting, which the human mind could adopt, as a memorial of the redeeming God, and as a bond of sanctity between earth and heaven."

"I am deeply interested in this subject which you have just disclosed to us," said the emperor, "and should be much delighted if, when next the strangers celebrate the rites of their religion, I could be present to witness them. As to the shrine of Mahadeo, let it be demolished."

"Methinks it is the hour," rejoined Zeine-deen, rising and looking at the sun, "when they perform their mid-day worship. They have converted a large cavern in the neighbouring mountain into a temple, where they are already attended by many followers. Yes, I hear the echo of the hymn to the Virgin by which they usually preface their service."

"Let us join them," exclaimed the emperor, "without delay."

As the hermit and his companions proceeded

towards the mountain whence the sounds proceeded, they were struck by the peculiar solemnity and harmony of the tones which reached their ears. There was no effort at effect in the music. It was the simple modulation of a suppliant heart bending before the throne of the Most High, breathing of confidence in the affection of the Parent to whom it was addressed, and calculated to raise the soul to the contemplation of other worlds.

It swelled and died gradually upon the air as they went along, and at some turns in the path it floated apparently so near them, that they could almost distinguish the words. At the next step the melody died away, as if it were terminated, and again a few paces and the full choir, for all the worshippers joined in the anthem, resounded from the cavern, at the entrance to which Jehangire and his companions paused to listen.

CHAPTER IV.

I myself will take of the marrow of the high cedar, and will set it: on the high mountains of Israel will I plant it; and it shall become a great cedar, and every fowl shall make its nest under the branches thereof.

EZZKIEL.

PROCEEDING forward, the emperor and his companions perceived an altar raised at the end of the subterranean gallery, and illuminated by torches, amidst which were arranged bunches of flowers. Upon the altar was spread a snow-white cloth, fringed with gold, and before a small shrine of variegated marble, which was erected on the middle of

the altar, stood a richly chased golden chalice, covered by a paten of the same material. Over both was disposed a veil of brocade, embroidered with silver.

The cavern chapel was nearly filled with shepherds and peasants, dressed out in their holiday costume, for it happened to be a festival of the Virgin. They were all kneeling, and waiting with profound devotion for the commencement of the service. Aquaviva, and his two companions, appeared prostrate at the foot of the altar, habited in vestments of brocade like that with which the chalice was covered, the figure of a cross being worked in silver on the backs of the sacred garments. Aquaviva wore a mitre of silver tissue; his assistants were bare-headed.

Rising from the attitude of silent supplication, which they had for some minutes preserved, they stood and prayed aloud that God might send them his light and truth, and pardon them their sins, that so they might enter his sanctuary with pure minds. They appealed to the Virgin, and to the saints by whom the eternal throne is surrounded, to mediate in their behalf.

A beautiful boy, clad in a muslin surplice, then placed in Aquaviva's hand a golden censer, filled with kindled frankincense, with which he fumed the altar. Having again intreated the mercy of God, he paused a moment, and intoned in a sweet voice, tremulous with piety, that hymn of joy, of which the heavenly messengers, who proclaimed the arrival of the Messiah, pronounced the first words—"Glory to the God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will."

The assembly took up the anthem, and in a burst of exclamation declared their adhesion to the faith of the Redeemer. Him they praised, and blessed, and adored—him they acknowledged to be the Christ, come to take away the sins of the world. To him, sitting in majesty at the right hand of the Father, they prayed for protection, because he is the Holy One, who, with the Spirit, is most high in the glory of the Omnipotent.

A splendidly illuminated missal being then placed on a stand, Monserrate read from it a selection of verses from the Canticles, each of which bore some allusion to the Messiah. He was the graceful fawn leaping on the moun-

tains, and skipping over the hills;—the lover peeping through the lattices, and calling on his beautiful one to come, for that the winter was past, the rain was gone, the flowers appeared in the land, it was the time of pruning, the voice of the turtle-dove was heard, the fig-tree had put forth her green figs, and the vines in flower yielded their delicious fragrance. “Arise, my beautiful one, and come, shew me thy face; let thy voice sound in my ear, for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely.”

“Such is the affectionate language,” said the venerable prelate, when he afterwards explained these verses to his simple and confiding audience, “in which the Messiah is represented as addressing his church, after the difficulties attending its first establishment were surmounted. Ages of opposition and suffering were her winter; but the spring-day of her hopes, the promise of her universal triumph, was already at hand.”

These verses were followed by a history of the Virgin, during a visit which she paid to one of her relatives in the hill-country of Juda, to announce the tidings which an angel brought her, that the Spirit of the Most High should

overshadow her, and that she should bring forth a Son. Her cousin, to whom she communicated this intelligence, was a woman far advanced in years; but in her womb lived one who was to be the predecessor of the Messiah, to proclaim his approach, to fill the valley, to level the mountain before him, and to prepare the path in which he should go. That infant, enshrined though he was, heard the Virgin's voice of salutation, and leaped with joy. Her aged hostess blessed her, and the rejoicing maiden, inspired by the sublimity and sanctity of her office, poured forth her soul in a hymn to the mighty God, who regarded the humility of his handmaid, and entitled her to be called "blessed" by all future generations.

The audience listened to these truths, and to the explanations of Aquaviva, with earnest attention, and the most lively marks of pleasure, feeling like travellers who had been long lost in a wilderness, and at length rescued from despair by the arrival of a guide, who pointed out the way of which they were in search.

Their hearts were in their voices, when they joined the prelate in again plighting their allegiance to the Creator of heaven and earth,

and of all things visible and invisible—to the Redeemer, the “Light of light,” and to the Holy Spirit by whom he became incarnate—commemorating, at the same time, his crucifixion, his resurrection, his ascension; and expressing their belief that he will come again to earth, to judge those whom he shall find living, and all the nations of the dead who shall rise from their tombs at the summons of the dread archangel.

It was the great object of the rite, at which they were now assembled, to prepare them for that awful day, and to propitiate the Deity through the sacrifice about to be offered—an unspotted host, which the suppliant prelate with upraised hands tendered to Heaven, not only for his own sins, and for those of all present, but for all christians, whether passing or passed through the stages of this life. With the host the prelate offered also wine and water—mysterious symbols of the union of the Divinity with human nature—raising the chalice as an odour of sweetness for the salvation of the whole world.

The progress of the rite became more and more solemn as it advanced. The censer was

again filled with burning frankincense, and brought by that beautiful boy to the prelate, who again fumed the altar, and prayed that through the intercession of Michael the archangel, and of all the elect standing round the eternal throne, the incense might be blessed, and that, ascending to that throne, it might invoke upon the worshippers the benedictions of the Most High.

The prelate then washed his hands among the "innocent"—and well they might be so called, a cluster of boys all robed in white, one of whom kneeling held a silver basin, while a second poured water on the prelate's fingers from a ewer of the same material. A third presented him with a napkin fringed with gold.

Turning once more to the altar, and placing himself in the attitude of a high-priest, filling the most sublime of all human stations, he called upon the prostrate assembly to elevate their hearts to God, and to give Him thanks, for it was truly fit and just that they should at all times, and in all places, express their gratitude to the Eternal, whom the angels and the archangels, the cherubim and the seraphim, and the whole host of heaven, never ceased to

proclaim as the holy God, with whose glory the heavens and the earth were filled—in whose praise unnumbered worlds, rolling through the oceans of space, resounded with alleluias.

Many of the saints were then called upon by name—the Virgin Mother—the glorious apostles—the armies of heroic martyrs, who had sealed their faith by their heart's blood—Peter and Paul, and John and Damian—and the whole court of heaven, to give their aid on this occasion, that the oblation tendered to the Supreme Father for his human family might be accepted, and be converted into the body and blood of the Redeemer.

The awful words of consecration, pronounced in a low solemn voice, being breathed upon the host and chalice, they were held up, through clouds of incense, to the adoration of the people, who, in profound silence struck their breasts, filled with gratitude and wonder that so great a God should visit them, and that too under a veil suitable to human vision—and protecting it from being overwhelmed by the living splendour of his glory!

It was an affectionate thought, to choose the moment after this act, for uttering a prayer

for parents, relations, friends, and all christians, without exception, who had departed from this life; and while the Redeemer was still present, to intreat that he would grant them a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Nor was it less appropriate, to offer up at such a time a fervent orison to God, couched in the simple language which the Messiah had himself framed, entreating that earth might be made to emulate heaven in blessing the name of the Most High, and in executing his will; that he would protect all those who called upon that sacred name, and forgive them as they forgave those who offended them.

The lamb thus offered for the living and the dead being consumed, hymns of thanksgiving followed;—in these the hermit joined with a degree of enthusiasm, which attested his admiration of a faith that appeared at once to have touched his soul with its light, and to have captivated his heart by the divine love for mankind it disclosed through every expression of its beautiful ritual.

“ Oh, sire!” he exclaimed, when as they were returning from this scene, the emperor questioned him upon the mystery of the sacri-

face; "do not ask my understanding to explain matters altogether above my comprehension. Can this be a human conception? Could any intellect, informed merely as yours or mine might be, however pregnant with knowledge, however matured by experience, have thought of such doctrines as those delivered by the Messiah; or have planned a sacrifice such as he has directed his followers to offer?

"What is man? An insect living on a planet that is but as a mole-hill to the Himalas. What do I understand even of what goes on under my own eye? Can I tell you how the acorn becomes the spreading oak?—how the wretched looking worm, that moves itself with difficulty along the earth, by-and-by sports in celestial colours upon double wings through the skies?—how the rain of winter becomes the wine of autumn?—the dew of to-night the milk and honey of to-morrow? I break a fragment of a rock, and I behold in it a creature full of life. Can I tell you how it has slept there for thousands of years without dying? I take up a drop of water, and I behold it teeming with a world of creatures of its own. Can I tell you how or why they came there; for what purpose

they have received the most perfect organization which their wants can require? I listen to the zephyr with delight,—to the tempest with admiration,—to the thunder with awe. Can I say whence they come? Can I measure the Power which tempers the one to the unshorn lamb, and renders it music to the human ear? Can I check the storm or arrest the lightning, and ask them to explain to me the mysteries that overwhelm my mind, when I think of the worlds I am to see when I shake off this clay by which my spirit is incumbered?

“ Fool! It was my madness once to suppose that I could quell the elemental tumults which sometimes break out amongst these mountains; that I could count the stars, and calculate their influence upon the destinies of mankind, as if men were the objects for whom those vast worlds have been summoned to existence! I tremble at my inconceivable presumption. I bow to the Supreme One henceforth. I am scarcely a child in his presence. A child!—yes! his child—his creature,—for whom he sent his own best beloved to this my dwelling. I have found the truth, which the stars had failed to teach me—the peace which

this world could never give me—the hope, the certainty, if I but endeavour to merit it, which no other worship could afford me, of mingling my voice with those alleluias which I can almost hear as I speak, swelling to the throne of light from all parts of the universe.”

CHAPTER V.

Sing, sing them forth
 Songs of the past-away,
 To mingle with the woe and mirth,
 And music of to-day :
 Legends of other hours,
 Stray leaves of faded flowers,
 Sing, sing them forth !
 Hush ! breathe ye low
 The quaint love words ;
 The whisper-voice of long ago,
 Fond, old records
 Of dreamy hopes and fears,
 And hearts of other years,
 Oh ! breathe them low !

YSSZB.

THE display of the imperial standard upon the principal pavilion, announced the arrival of Jehangire at the encampment of his troops, which was established at the distance of little more than a league from the subah's castle. Attended by Bochari and Auzeem, he was on horseback at the dawn of the day, and approaching the castle as nearly as he could, without danger of being observed, he convinced

himself that the account given by Chunder, of the impregnable character of that fortress, was by no means exaggerated. He was, therefore, the more disposed to attend to the counsel of Bochari, who recommended that the high chancellor should exert his influence with the subah to surrender the castle upon reasonable conditions.

The question then was, what those conditions should be. Chusero's submission to the imperial authority could, under no circumstances, be dispensed with. He must place himself absolutely at the disposal of his father, upon whose indulgent consideration, however, he might confidently rely. His right of succession to the throne was to be preserved to him in case he should accept the terms now proposed.

It was resolved also that Shere Afkun should resign Cashmere, but that, instead of it, he should be presented with Bengal. Kazim, who was present at the council, during the discussion of these propositions, fully approved of them. He only wondered at the moderate character by which they were pervaded. Auzeem listened in silence to the very conciliatory language held by Bochari on the occasion, who professed to think that he knew of no

other means of terminating the civil war, seeing that the subah might hold out against them to an indefinite period.

Nothing, therefore, added Bochari, could have been more opportune than the arrival of the messengers, who were charged with letters from the subah and his consort for Kazim. An answer might be returned forthwith on his part, accepting their invitation, and if it were not inconvenient to him, he might depart from the camp in the course of the evening for the castle. The high chancellor having signified his assent to this arrangement, Bochari observed that it was due to the dignity of the exalted office held by Kazim that he should proceed to the castle with all the outward circumstances of honour which could be devised for that purpose, and with an abundance of presents for his daughter, as was usual on such occasions. Jehangire fully approved of this course, and directed that twenty palanquins filled with gold and silver cloths of Persia, carpets, and shawls, and silks, should be despatched in Kazim's train. Bochari took it upon himself to arrange all the necessary pageantry.

Shere Afkun's messengers having received letters in answer to those which he and Nour-

mahal had addressed to Kazim and Mangeli, and also communications under the hand of the emperor, embracing the proposals which had been agreed upon in council, they set out upon their return to the castle. Upon dismounting within the gates they speedily diffused the intelligence, with which Bochari took care they should have been made fully acquainted, that the high chancellor was coming thither in the evening, for the purpose of negotiating a peace upon terms that could hardly fail to be acceptable to all parties. These tidings were received with unbounded joy by the great mass of the inmates of the fortress, who, however secure they deemed themselves from any immediate danger, felt by no means free from alarm when they observed from the eminences the powerful force by which the emperor was attended.

The ladies of the harem especially, relieved from the trepidations with which that spectacle filled their minds, looked forward with more than ordinary interest to the agreeable office of preparing for the reception of Nourmahal's beloved parents. The news reached them while they were assembled in the general bath-room; and never, perhaps, before did they enjoy with

more intense delight the luxuries of that scene. Perfumed waters were poured over them from silver vases by black slaves, well experienced in all the arts by which the delicious languor of exhaustion may be prolonged to the very verge of visionary existence. Reclining on marble slabs, heated to the exact degree that most favours repose, they were each wrapped in loose robes, which when saturated might be said no longer to conceal the forms beneath them, they presented the appearance of beings scarcely belonging to this world. Surrounded by a hazy atmosphere of variable fragrance, the slaves standing by the flowing fountains, and collecting the tempered element in their vases, or pouring it with a gentle grace upon the almost slumbering nymph below, seemed so many magicians empowered to detain in forgetfulness all the beauteous victims entrusted to their care.

At the appointed moment, however, the fountains ceased to flow, otherwise the spell might know no limit. The vapours cleared away, the humid garments were exchanged for ample well-aired wrappers, and all hastened to the saloon, where the hair, after being thoroughly dried, was anointed with fragrant oils, plaited

in long folds, and tied at the extremity with golden cords, from which tassels of the same material depended. A painted handkerchief was intertwined with it on the top of the head, the ends of which, fringed with gold, fell gracefully on the shoulders. The hair in front, drawn down a little over the forehead, was parted and braided over the ear, and decorated by a few simple flowers, such as the geranium, or the monthly white rose, according to the complexion or fancy of the wearer. A light sleep, such as the houris enjoy when lulled to repose by the bulbul of Paradise, restored the energies which the bath had almost stolen away; and coffee, followed by viands of every description, confectionery, ices, sherbets, and Kabul nectar, which the prophet himself could not have rejected if offered to his lips, prepared for the further labours of the toilet.

Fine lawn chemisettes, edged with lace, tunics of green or ruby-coloured silk, descending below the knee, confined at the waist by cinctures of gold or silver tissue, having in front clasps of emerald or diamond, trowsers of snow-white lawn, necklaces of pearl, armlets and bracelets of variegated precious stones, and tiny

slippers richly flowered with gold, generally completed the costume of the harem.

The operations of the toilet having been concluded, the ladies waited the presence of Nourmahal, before they set about arranging the series of amusements with which they resolved to entertain the expected guests. She seldom passed a day of which she did not devote some portion to her fair companions. She taught most of them to read, and accustomed them, by her own example, to derive pleasure from the writings of the most popular poets, which she put into their hands. To her instruction also several of them were indebted for a knowledge of embroidery. Before the commencement of the civil war, when all was at peace in the castle, and before the happiness of Afkun received its death-blow, he seldom claimed his privilege of entry into the harem with more pleasure, than during the hours when he was likely to find Nourmahal there, presiding over the operations of the frame, upon which numbers of fairy fingers were busy, animating the canvass stretched out before them with landscapes copied from her sketches, or scenes of real or mimic war, dictated by her copious

knowledge, or suggested by her splendid imagination.

Mainuna, a Mingrelian, always took care that the hours usually devoted to industry should not encroach upon those which belonged to pleasure. At the first touch of her tambourine, which she flung up in the air and then caught upon her fingers, while its silver bells resounded of joy, a general clatter of merriment was raised, and all adjourned to the music saloon.

Sometimes Nourmahal found herself surrounded by a mob of petitioners, who would take no refusal, and bore her with them into the apartment, from which there was no escape until she awoke for them those sounds from the lyre which they all confessed they never could find in it by any exertion of their own. They unanimously declared that the modulations which she elicited, must have come from some viewless chords, created for the moment by her enchanting power.

On the present occasion, however, her mind was not in a mood to assist in the preparation of festivities. She hardly knew whether she should experience more of pleasure or of sorrow

from the visit of her parents, to whom she would probably deem it necessary to disclose the interview she had with the emperor, and the decisive confession she had made to Afkun. To bare her whole heart to her mother—to hide in that affectionate bosom her tears, her blushes, her exalted anticipations, her agony for the sufferings she had inflicted on the subah, was the only course by which she could relieve her heart from the accumulated burthens by which it was oppressed,

To Mainuna, therefore, she delegated the office of arranging the amusements of the harem, during the sojourn of the high-chancellor and his attendants at the castle—an office which that light-hearted girl undertook with measureless delight, as she was full of all sorts of projects, masqued balls, fancy fairs, dramatic interludes, musical concerts, and new dances, for the realization of which she had long been importuning her stars.

Calling all her companions together in her own apartment, they sat on the carpet in a circle, and as she developed her plans, they discussed them one by one, with all due gravity. The parts which each was to perform in the ap-

proaching exhibitions, were assigned in a way to create no jealousies, and it having been settled that the first evening was to be dedicated to the concert and the masquerade ball, the fair senators dispersed for the purpose of selecting their most sumptuous dresses and ornaments, that nothing might be wanted which could tend to the gratification of their distinguished guests.

As the sun was setting, the sentinels on the watch-tower observed a long train of palanquins winding down from the hill upon which the imperial tents were erected. Orders were immediately given to let the draw-bridge down. A veteran officer who happened to be in the watch-tower when the palanquins first appeared in sight, was struck by their number; he counted no less than five-and-twenty; and as to each palanquin there were four bearers, his cautious habits of garrison discipline suggested, that it was not in conformity with ordinary rules, that so many men from the ranks of the enemy should be admitted at once within the walls. He directed, therefore, that only one palanquin should be suffered to enter at a time; and that the bearers, after setting it down in a spacious hall, ge-

nerally used for that purpose, should immediately re-cross the drawbridge, and return to the camp.

As the procession approached the gate, Zeinedeen made his appearance in the plain, walking hastily towards it. Kazim and Mangeli, who had been anxiously gazing on the windows of the castle, hoping that they might discern, in some of them, the figure of her in whom all their affections were concentrated, did not perceive the hermit until they heard him ordering their bearers, in a peremptory tone, to stop for a moment. Kazim, surprised, and by no means pleased, that his progress should be retarded at such a moment, opening the curtain of the palanquin, demanded the cause of the interruption. Zeinedeen made no answer, but looking steadily at Kazim, smiled with a look of recognition, which, to Mangeli, was altogether incomprehensible. The palanquin, however, was immediately let down by order of her companion, who, going forth, threw himself into the arms already wide extended to receive him.

“My best of benefactors! my more than friend! my father! for such, indeed, you have been to me! do I behold you once more?”

“ You recollect the poor dervish, then, Kazim ?”

“ Recollect ! Never has left my heart the impression of that face, which came to my humble stall all wreathed in those smiles which are now again upon your countenance, and announced to me those destinies, which have ever since been fortunate.”

“ You see my ambition was no mean one. A poor, despised dervish, a mere mendicant ; nevertheless, from the moment I saw you at Samarcand, and witnessed the proofs of your genius, I resolved that you should not pine in obscurity. The boy, in whom I delighted as a scholar, I now behold as the high chancellor of Hindostan ! Welcome, dear Kazim, to my heart !”

Mangeli needed no explanation of this occurrence. Often had the dervish—their good genius as they loved to call him—been the subject of their conversation, when walking together in their garden, apart from all the world, they talked over the steps of their chequered career, from their hut on the Ilamish, to their palace on the Jumna. She too would have gladly followed her husband’s example, and

embraced the kind old man ; but Zeinedeen prevented her from rising.

“ No,” he said, “ Mangeli ; for I shall know you by no other name. I shall keep you no longer from the pleasure you are about to enjoy, in beholding your beloved child. It is but a few days since I have seen her, and gladdened her heart with the tidings of your speedy arrival in the camp.”

“ But you shall not part from us again,” said Mangeli, pressing the arm of the dervish with both her hands. “ You must come with us to our Nourmahal.”

“ You must, indeed,” added Kazim. “ If the chancellor have any authority, he shall use it in this instance.”

“ And it shall be obeyed, provided the subah will admit me. I have some things to say to you, which will demand instant attention. Allah, bless you both ! I shall walk beside your palanquin to the castle.”

As they were now, however, but a short distance from the draw-bridge, Kazim would not permit the hermit to proceed thither alone. Closing the curtains of the palanquin, he resigned Mangeli to the care of the bearers ; and,

notwithstanding the remonstrances of Zeinedeen, who urged the chancellor not to descend from his state by walking, side by side, with an humble dervish, he proceeded on foot, having, he said, a thousand questions to put to his friend, which he could not begin too soon.

CHAPTER VI.

Within his halls are heard the songs of joy,
The clash of cymbals, and the thrilling notes
Of harps, and drums, and merry feet are seen
Winding the Labyrinthine dance. But hark!
What sounds are those that echo in the air?
Are they the wailings of the infant storm?
Or come they from the regions of the dead?

HINDOO DRAMA.

AFKUN hastened across the bridge, to receive the man whom he esteemed above all the other objects now left to him to love upon earth. Profound and various were the emotions with which they met on both sides. By political principle, enemies—by connexion, father and son, and as much attached to each other as if the same blood circulated in their veins,—they embraced in silence—a silence more affecting than any language could be under the circum-

stances. For Zeinedeen, however, as Kazim's friend, the subah found the pleasant words of hospitality, and for Mangeli, whose palanquin he attended into the hall, those expressions of affection, which, for the moment, superseded all other thoughts.

The four palanquins, which immediately followed that of Kazim, contained his suite and the female attendants of his consort. The remaining twenty, which were closely latticed, appeared to be heavily stored with presents, over which superb Indian shawls were spread. As there was not time for disburthening the latter, the servants of the castle being all busily engaged in preparing for the festivities of the evening, the vehicles were arranged in the hall, side by side.

Kanun was in attendance, to conduct the agitated parents to the chamber where they were to see their child. As they approached it, the door of the apartment was opened. "My mother!—my father!" exclaimed that well-known voice, as Nourmahal came forth to meet them—pressing an arm round the neck of each—kissing them again and again—her eyes filled with tears—tears of that sacred joy,

in which a grief still more sacred had its share.

Upon the part of the parents there was the same mysterious double emotion. The time that had elapsed since the marriage of Nourmahal appeared to have been but a day. It brought with it the conviction, however, that she whom they so deeply loved had been absent from the home of her infancy, and with that thought came the anticipation of the period when death would produce between them a separation still more enduring. Maternal and filial love summoned together, at once, these recollections of the past, these fears of the future. It was not until they again became somewhat more accustomed to the presence and voices of each other, that the feeling of delight, in thus meeting once more, charmed away their apprehensions.

Seated between the two beloved fountains of her life, Nourmahal gave herself up to all the luxury of rapture. Now looking at one dear countenance, now on the other, she examined with affectionate curiosity the changes wrought in each since last she beheld them. She was herself the subject of similar vigilance, espe-

cially from the eye of Mangeli, who had already noticed in that forehead, once so open and so innocent, variations of expression approaching to traces of care, if not of anxiety, which she had never discerned there before. It was too soon yet to inquire farther into the cause of these external changes. As their visit was to extend to several days, ample opportunities would occur for every explanation which was necessary to soothe the solicitude of a mother.

The sounds of many musical instruments from the harem, reminded Nourmahal of the commencement of the festivities, which had been prepared in honour of the subah's guests. Having attended her parents to the apartments assigned to their use, she proceeded, with Kanun's assistance, to arrange her toilet for the evening. No art of the Circassian could, however, succeed in restoring to the cheek of her mistress its wonted lustre. The first emotions caused by the occurrences of the evening having subsided, she dreaded the idea of again meeting Afkun—of meeting him too in the presence of those who would necessarily notice her manner towards him with peculiar anxiety.

Nevertheless, the effort was to be made; and Nourmahal felt that when her resolution was put to the test, she could at all times call to her aid the powers of a mind of no common order.

It was some relief to her feelings, that when she went into the ball-room with her mother, her rapid glance around could nowhere discern the subah. He was still detained in the dining-hall, where, in addition to the Prince and Kazim, several omrahs, and the principal officers of the garrison, were engaged in consultation upon the propositions which had been made by the emperor. Meantime masqued figures, arrayed in every variety of fanciful costume, some as veteran dames, whose business it was to go from harem to harem to arrange love affairs—some as gipsies, who had the power to predict fortunes—some as pilgrims, on their way to Mecca—some as story-tellers and reciters of poetry—some as poor ballad-singers, lame and querulous, with a patch on one eye, indicative of recent battle—some as doctresses, skilled in those most baffling of all maladies, the diseases of the heart—some as holy dervishes, full of all sorts

of sanctified admonitions for inexperienced maidens—some as slaves, just arrived from Mingrelia, and offering to sell themselves to the highest bidder—were moving about in all directions.

In one place an auction was going on, at which the auctioneer was most eloquent in describing the charms of his own wife, whom he wished to sell, as it was his intention to retire altogether from matrimonial life. He had vowed, he said, to write a theological work in forty volumes; he found study inconsistent with wedded occupations, his wife complaining, very naturally, that he devoted more of his time to books than he did to her; they therefore both agreed to part upon the most amicable terms. He spoke of her eyes as rivals to the evening star, displayed her ringlets as stolen from the head of a sleeping goddess, and her face as the model of female beauty. The lady was closely covered all the time, by way of consulting her modesty, which would have blushed at such eulogies. Prices ran high. A hundred rupees soon swelled to five hundred—then to a thousand—two—three—four thousand. A sonorous voice having cried out

ten thousand, the bargain was at once struck, the lady was unveiled, when she turned out to be an old beldame, with a face furrowed by wrinkles, a solitary eye, and a pile of black hair, stolen, indeed, as the auctioneer said, from some quarter or another. The buyer appealed to all that were present against the fraud practised upon him; but they unanimously decided the bargain to be irrevocable, and he was compelled to take his purchase home, amidst the laughter of the assembly.

In another quarter actors were engaged in the performance of a drama, the interest of which turned upon a dispute between two gossiping dames, as to which of them was entitled to the higher reward for bringing about a recent marriage. One alleged, that she was the first to mention the gentleman to the lady—the other, that she was the first to mention the lady to the gentleman. One swore, that in one day she took seven messages from the gentleman to the lady—against which her rival produced an account of seven-and-twenty refusals from the lady to the gentleman, all despatched in one morning, and which would have been fatal to the union but for her clever

management. This claim to superior skill threw her antagonist into a rage, during which she enumerated all the marriages she had ever made—the difficulties which she overcame in reconciling young maidens to ancient bachelors, and cadets without fortune to opulent old widows, not always of the most comely appearance.

The controversy seemed likely to have no end, except in an appeal to blows, when the bride herself came forward and stated that the reward for priority belonged to neither of the belligerents, for that a third agent had commenced the affair before either of them knew any thing about it. The bridegroom confirmed this statement, to which, however, the parties declined giving any credit, unless the said agent was produced. To this the bride consented, and going out, said she would send the woman to them. In a few moments a wizen-faced little creature, wrapped in a cloak, and supported on crutches, made her appearance, whom the bridegroom acknowledged to be the first who gave him intelligence of the attractions of the maiden who had since become his wife, whereupon the two rivals both set to

scolding her in the most furious manner, and knocking her crutches from under her, reviled her as an impostor. In the affray, the cloak was not spared, which they tore off her shoulders, when, to their amazement and horror, the object of their wrath turned out to be the bride herself, who, all blushing, confessed that she had assumed that disguise to win the hand of one towards whom her heart impelled her the first day she beheld him in the streets through her lattice.

Mangeli and Nourmahal could not help being amused by these scenes of merriment, which were sustained with all the spirit of mirth; doubly zested by a long privation of similar enjoyments. The prince and the omrahs now made their appearance, followed by the officers of the garrison; the intelligence that the emperor's propositions had been accepted, was speedily diffused, and this circumstance, added to the gay costume of the officers and their hearty participation in the entertainments, contributed to heighten the animation of the scene.

Two closely masqued figures, whom Nourma-

hal suspected to be her father and the subah remained at the lower end of the saloon in deep conversation. She felt no wish to interrupt it, and affected to busy herself, though her feelings were far from being at ease, in describing to her mother the qualities of the different inmates of the harem, as they came in succession to kiss the hem of her garments.

Zeinedeen, who had no occasion for disguise, passed through the saloons to observe, for a moment, a spectacle so new to him. His curiosity, however, having been soon satisfied, and the heat and glaring light of a thousand lamps having affected him with a sense of giddiness, he withdrew from this scene of merriment, and endeavoured to make his way to the ramparts, in order to recover his usual composure. Being unacquainted with the interior of the castle, he found himself involved in a labyrinth of chambers appropriated to different purposes, until he at length arrived in the spacious hall, where the palanquins that had arrived with Kazim were arranged. It struck him, as he entered this apartment, which was quite open to the air in front, and illuminated almost through-

out its whole extent by the moon, then riding in full glory through the blue firmament, that he heard some rustling among the palanquins, which were rather more remote than the others from the light.

He stopped a moment, when he was still more startled by perceiving the shadow of a head moving along the wall; he called out, hoping that it was a sentinel who might shew him the way to the ramparts. But he received no answer, the head disappearing the moment his call was uttered.

Zeinedeen's suspicions being roused, he retraced his steps a little as softly as possible, and then stopping, he listened with all the attention he could command in the first moment of his alarm. He felt that he was near a number of persons, whose breathing discomposed the stillness that ought to have prevailed, if the palanquins, round which the curtains were still closed, had been all occupied only by the presents sent to Nourmahal.

Seized by an irresistible presentiment, that some treachery was meditated; and impelled, also, by the distrust which he always felt with

respect to Bochari, he returned to the ball-room, and addressing himself to Kazim, entreated that he, and Mangeli, and Nourmahal, would withdraw, one by one, from the saloon, and repair to the apartments of the latter, without a moment's delay, for that danger was at hand. He would follow them thither as soon as possible.

The hermit then looked about anxiously in search of the subah, whom he found in earnest conversation with Chusero. They had both noticed two or three strange faces in the ball-room, which, upon being pointed out to Kazim, he declared to be new also to him. The unbidden guests thus observed, had entered the saloon separately; but were evidently, from their side glances at one another, present for some common purpose. They mingled in the dance; but their movements were so awkward, and their manners so rude, that the fair damsels, whose hands they presumed to touch, instinctively recoiled from their advances.

Zeinedeen asked the subah whether any person had examined the palanquins containing the chancellor's presents? Afkun answered

that he did not know. The hermit then mentioned to him his suspicions—suspicions which were by no means diminished when Chusero remarked, that the three strangers were no longer to be seen in the ball-room.

This was no time for deliberation. Afkun resolved at once to proceed to the hall, where the palanquins were placed; but, as he opened the door of a gallery leading in that direction, a dark mass of armed men hurrying along the gallery, rushed towards the saloon, at the same time pouring on all before them a deadly discharge of musquetry. Afkun fell, pierced by several balls, one of which passed through his heart. He never breathed again. The prince was wounded in the thigh, and fell also. But there was a cry amongst the assassins, "Take care of the prince!" He was borne away upon the shoulders of a gigantic ruffian. The hermit, who happened to be immediately behind Afkun when the door was opened, escaped unhurt.

Being unarmed, he had no chance of offering any resistance. Hastening to one of the windows of the saloon, which was open, as they all were

in consequence of the heat of the weather, he leaped down into the court-yard, fortunately lighting on a pile of brambly wood collected for firing.

Though astounded for a moment by the shock, he soon came to himself, and hastened towards Nourmahal's apartments, where, notwithstanding his admonitions, he scarcely ventured to hope that he should find her and her parents in safety.

Several of the women were slain by the first discharge of musquetry. Some of the omrahs and officers of the garrison, who, as usual, wore ataghans in their cinctures, having laid aside their pistols that they might join the more easily in the dance, attacked their assailants with all the fury of desperation. But the musquetry soon overpowered them. The successive volleys which were repeated with fiendish deliberation, strewed the floor with groups of dead and dying, who fell over each other shrieking.

The cries of the defenceless females were appalling. Some appeared at the windows, their garments on fire, stretching out their

arms, and rending the air with shouts for assistance from the garrison. But their cries were shortly silenced. Lifted sabres hewed them down without mercy. Torrents of blood ran along the boards that so lately resounded to the merry step of the dancer. The echoes of rejoicing song, and harp, and dulcimer, were overtaken in their career by screams of agony which were heard in every direction.

CHAPTER VII.

Hark ! 'tis the thunder of the war,
They call, the trumpets shrill ;
Arise, go forth. Alas ! 'tis vain,—
Thy gallant heart is still !
A banner waves above thy head,
And laurels deck thy brow ;
But what avails this pageantry
To the beloved one now ?

I never more shall hear thy voice,
My beautiful ! my brave !
Thou'rt gone in all the pride of youth
And glory to thy grave.
Oh, would that I thy fate had shared !
That I were laid with thee ;
For now thou'rt gone, the peopled world
Is desolate to me !

STORY-TELLER OF CASHMERE.

THE soldiers of the garrison, taking up their arms, repaired as speedily as possible to the

scene of slaughter. Two or three of their officers, though fearfully wounded, bravely led them on to the conflict with the assassins, so long as the latter could be distinguished. But the moment these heard the troops coming, they proceeded to break and extinguish the lamps, and skulking away in the darkness, unfortunately effected their escape with little loss. Their confederates had already secured for them a retreat by the draw-bridge, to which, in the dreadful confusion of the hour, the usual attention had not been paid ; and it was soon ascertained that the prince, who had been, in the first instance, borne away wounded on the shoulders of one of the ruffians, undoubtedly remained their captive.

Search was made, as soon as lights could be obtained, for the body of the subah, who was already known to have been the first victim of this infamous scheme of indiscriminate murder. It was found in a recess of the gallery, near the spot where he first fell, but not alone. Kneeling down by his side, and bent closely over his pallid cheek, was seen the figure of a female, whose hand, filled with hair she had torn from her head, was pressed upon Afkun's bared

breast, the hair being saturated with blood which had welled from the death-wound. Looking up at the group of soldiers who surrounded her, she beckoned them wildly to go away.

“Oh foul murderers begone! Take my life too, if ye be not content with all the blood ye have shed. Oh, my noble master! my brave warrior! where is thy voice? speak to me but once—one little word,—’tis Kanun that asks,—her whom you bade to love you!”

The men, each of whom would have sacrificed his life for his commander, thought not of brushing away from their cheeks the tears that burst forth when they beheld him there laid prostrate. Vainly hoping that he still lived, they raised his head a little from the floor. The movement seemed to increase Kanun’s distraction. Grasping a scymitar, which one of the men held in his hand, she wrested it from him by an effort of feverish strength, and repelling them from the dead body, dared them to approach one step farther at their peril. But the weapon slipped from her hold. A gush of blood from her side shewed that she, too, was soon to be numbered in the holocaust immolated on that dreadful night. Pressing her hand upon her

forehead, she reeled and would have fallen, had she not been sustained by one of the soldiers.

“Ye keep me from him,” she exclaimed. “Oh, in mercy spare me at least while he breathes! Let me be near him,—let me warm him with my life! Oh, look! his hand moves! My lord! my master! they are your friends. I see they are. Their looks, their tears tell me so. They are come to receive your orders. The enemy are out! I hear their horses tramping this way! Up, before they are at the gates! Ah, you used not to be so slow when the battle raged!”

One of the soldiers fetched some water, with which he chafed her temples; while the others anxiously pressed their hands over every part of Afkun's frame, endeavouring to find there some pulse of life. But all the veins were still. That voice, by them so much beloved, was for ever silenced. That arm, once their protection, and the terror of a thousand foes, was now laid low, never again to wield the blade that had dealt destruction wherever it gleamed.

“Go, tell my mistress that the subah is here; that he waits to see her before he goes to meet the invader. Why do you not go? you know

how he adores her. But she, alas! never loved him!—never! Oh, to see how he kissed the earth on which she walked, and yet she loved him not! But she had no hand in this murder. No, no; accuse her not of that. This is all the work of that base-born Bochari. Yes, I know it. It is written here. The very walls, do they not cry out, Bochari, Bochari, the murderer!”

“She cannot be far from the truth,” said one of the soldiers. “It is certain that the assassins came from the camp; that they got admission within the gates in the palanquins which were supposed to be filled only with presents for Nourmahal; that they lay concealed until the festivities of the evening were at their height, and that they all rushed forth in a body to the saloon, where they at once gained their double object of murdering the subah, and capturing the prince. Some affirm that Bochari himself was present, and that it was he who, laying hands on the prince, bore him away.”

“Alas! it is all over!” exclaimed Kanun, taking up one of the subah’s hands, which dropped lifeless again on the floor; “but thy fall will not be unavenged. Blood will have blood. Ah! to think that thou shouldest have perished in this

manner! He said,—there are those who heard him, and mind ye obey his words,—he said, that the same urn,—the same, remember,—should contain the ashes of us both. My moment is come,—it rankles here, whatever it was that the murderers discharged upon us all,—the pain,—oh, the agony!—but it is nothing. Joy! joy! that I remain not behind thee! I come, my beloved mistress! Oh, where is she? Tell me if she be safe?”

The soldiers quieted her apprehensions upon this point, assuring her that the high chancellor, his wife and daughter, had fortunately quitted the saloon a few moments before the massacre had commenced.

“Oh, thanks to Allah! She was ever to me a good and kind mistress,—to me, to all of us! May every happiness await her,—she deserves it,—although she did not love thee as she ought. Ah, the pangs that thou must have suffered on her account! Thy manly heart was indeed bruised by many a long night’s grief! None knew thy secret sorrow so well as Kanun. None lamented for thee but Kanun. The day-star of thy life was set.—Remember, the same urn.—I come; thy voice—I hear it from some

other world—I come, beloved master! thy slave,—thy Kanun,—thy”—

A sob of agony told that her spirit was no more on earth. The soldiers, separating her gently from the body of the subah, upon whose knees her hands were clasped, bore her into the saloon, where they laid her upon a divan. They then conveyed the remains of the subah to his apartments in the castle, and watched by them during the remainder of the night.

The dawn of the following morning displayed a melancholy spectacle in those chambers, so lately the abode of mirth in its many forms. The prospect of a speedy peace had lent wings to every body engaged in those scenes of joy. But how changed from what they had been a few hours before, were those now prostrated in every direction. Scarcely a member of the harem escaped the slaughter. Some, whose clothes took fire, were partially burnt; tresses upon which so much care had been bestowed, were consumed to their roots; cheeks and lips, which the sun of the preceding day had seen so full of health and loveliness, presented but foul masses of deformity; limbs endowed with every grace, while still moving in the circles of the

cheerful dance, arrested in their gaiety, bent beneath the sylph-like burdens they could no longer bear, never to rise again. Mainuna was found with her tambourine still in her hand; the instrument was pierced by no fewer than three balls. A horrid gash on the neck disclosed the terrible destiny of that guileless and light-hearted girl. Musical instruments broken, ornaments thrown about in every part of the saloon, heaps of mangled bodies, blood trickling through the floor and clotted in vast quantities, fragments of gold and silver tissue, unbound turbans, broken scymitars, separated hands and feet, blood-stained walls and cushions, related with awful voices a tale of woe that called aloud to Heaven for vengeance upon the perpetrators of that merciless tragedy.

The survivors of the garrison lost no time in preparing funeral pyres, to which the unhappy victims were consigned. The ashes of the subah were collected with particular care, as were those also of Kanun; and, as he had directed, the relics of both were deposited in the same urn, and placed in the mausoleum of the fortress.

The soldier was rightly informed, who men-

tioned that Nourmahal and both her parents had retired from the saloon, but a few moments before the first fatal discharge of musquetry was heard. Kazim, taking warning, more from Zeinedeen's alarming manner than even from the words he used, hastened to Mangeli and his daughter, whom he found together, and concealing his apprehensions as much as he could, directed them to precede him out of the saloon, as he had something to say to both of the utmost importance. They were scarcely arrived in Nourmahal's private apartments when the firing began. The terrible cries which followed needed no interpretation. The apartments of Nourmahal offered no better chance of safety than any other part of the castle from the fury of assassins, such as those who, Kazim concluded, must by some treacherous stratagem have found their way into the fortress.

To consult for the safety of the two beings, who were infinitely dearer to him than his own existence, was naturally his first, his only care. They could give him no assistance. Every shriek that came from the saloon, threw them both into agonies of alarm, which rendered even the mind of Nourmahal incapable

of offering any suggestion for effecting their escape. Every noise they heard, they took to be the footsteps of the approaching murderers. They utterly despaired of safety, and could with difficulty clasp their trembling hands to utter a prayer to Heaven for protection. Death appeared so near them, that they waited for it to break into the chamber.

Moments passed, however, and they still lived. The tumult did not spread beyond that part of the castle where it had begun. Kazim's presence of mind never left him for an instant. Opening the door, he advanced a few paces into the adjoining corridor, and listened until he heard footsteps. They approached him rapidly. He retreated, and, shutting the door, locked it on the inside. The trembling women hung upon his neck. He requested them to be silent, if they valued their own lives. A knock, quickly repeated, and then a voice—"It is the hermit"—hush!

Kazim having assured himself that he was not mistaken, opened the door.

"Oh! my beloved friends," exclaimed Zeinedeen; "Allah be praised, you three are here! So far well. But no part of the castle is safe.

The assassins will, doubtless, be here immediately. You have a better chance of safety without than within. I heard the draw-bridge let down. The stratagem has been too skillfully planned. Wrap shawls around you. You, Kazim, take charge of Mangeli. Leave this dear one to me."

Zeinedeen led the way, having flung a shawl over Nourmahal's head. Kazim bore Mangeli in his arms, her limbs having refused to move. Down they stepped rapidly by a private staircase into a small court-yard—then through an archway to a passage which opened to the ramparts. The firing still continued—the shouts of the combatants came upon their ears with dreadful intensity. The hermit perceiving the grand portal, ran towards it. Kazim followed, without knowing whither he was going. A winding ladder led down to the porch. They were speedily at its foot—then on to the gate. Men were fighting on the draw-bridge—two were flung over into the water beneath—shots passed. Zeinedeen rushed on, grasping Nourmahal in his arms—they passed. Kazim with his burthen lingered. He too passed. Hastening through the plain, they ran towards the mountain,

seeking the first shade, the first rock, that could shut out the view of pursuers, if any. There the breathless fugitives checked their career.

No word was said. The four clung together, in silent thanksgiving to the Omnipotent. Their palpitating hearts beat against each other. As they calmed a little, they thought they heard other persons breathing loudly near them. Zeinedeen searched anxiously around. They might be pursuers, or fugitives like themselves. He could feel, or see nobody. The breathing still went on louder than before. At length they discovered that it was but the effect of their own excitement. The hill-side on which they rested was in profound repose. Cattle were sleeping beneath them in the quiet moonlight. A stream stole softly by, glistening now and then. The hermit and Kazim presented a portion of the delicious element, in the hollow of their hands, to Mangeli and Nourmahal. It restored the exhausted spirits of the daughter at once; but the mother's terrors were still unallayed. She held Kazim close to her—would not suffer him again to go to the brook. Nourmahal spoke to her in vain—she was cold with terror. A slight hysteri-

cal laugh was succeeded by a swoon, in which she remained for some minutes.

Nourmahal moistened her mother's temples and her lips with water. When she recovered she still trembled. Zeinedeen, who was well acquainted with the spot where they now were, feeling that Mangeli might be in danger if they remained here longer, resolved, at all hazards, to proceed on towards his own residence.

CHAPTER VIII.

When morn is waking in its mirth,
And flowers are softly weeping,
The quiet bosom of the earth
In pearly dew-drops steeping :
I love to feel the zephyr's sigh,
To list the wild birds' singing ;
And watch along the silent sky
The morn's gay beauty springing.

YSEE.

THE fugitives, though able to walk but slowly onwards, felt a growing consciousness of safety, which gradually restored strength to Mangeli and Nourmahal, without lessening the sense of horror still pressing on their minds. The moon had already grown pale. The day-star was hastening through clouds whose lower edges were lines of a saffron hue,—the faint reflection of the ocean of light still beneath the horizon. These were succeeded by streaks of thin vapour, sprinkled here and there by roseate tints, while the sheep, busily browsing

on the ridges of the eastern mountains, appeared clothed in fleeces of gold. The birds, chirping lowly to each other, flitted timidly amongst the trees, summoning their tribes to meet the morning with their usual anthems of adoration. The mists of night, gradually disappearing, left the meadows enriched with dews that soon sparkled in the coming rays, and the scenery of the country becoming every moment more clearly defined, shewed its pastures, and gardens, and villages in all the beauty of renovated life.

Amidst the songs which burst from all sides upon the ears of the early travellers, there were other tones of a still more soothing nature, to which Zeinedeen called their attention. The missionaries were already in their cavern chapel, engaged in the performance of their matin-office, consisting partly of hymns and litanies which they sung, aided by a small choir, partly of psalms, which they recited in those solemn suppliant notes that seem to resound of the primitive ages of the world. They called to their God, who they trusted would hear them from his sacred hill, elevated above the heavens, who had made man little less than the angels, and had subjected to him

all creatures that winged their way through the air, or trod the land, or moved through the paths of the sea. Pure were the promises of that Great Being, as silver tried by the fire: unblemished the tabernacles he had prepared for those who loved him,—tabernacles set in the sun, from which he came forth as a bridegroom from his bridal chamber. Ah! those were the abodes to be desired more than the honeycomb—more than gold or precious stones!

There were seasons when even the best man felt miserable—when he walked sorrowful all the day long—when his brain was filled with illusions, and he mourned in the depths of his heart: Friends and neighbours who used to draw near to him, stood afar off, and those were multiplied who hated him wrongfully. But these were seasons not without their use. They taught him that his days on earth were measured—that he was to pass from it as an image from the face of the waters, and that to disquiet his soul was of all things the most vain, even though the companion of his peace, who ate his bread, and in whom he trusted, had supplanted him.

Those hours of sorrow passed, hope returned to him, because he was right of heart, and

bade him to look forward to the eternal firmament, where it would be his happy destiny to join in the jubilee of those spirits who exulted in the glory of the Supreme, who for ever sounded the notes of joy from the trumpet, the psaltery, and the cymbal.

These voices—so soft—so harmonious—so full of peace—so different from the terrific cries which lately assailed their ears, came upon the trembling nerves of the hermit and his companions like a heavenly balm. They lingered to hear those tones repeated. They entered the humble chapel, where they found the missionaries, in their plain monastic attire, kneeling before their sacred altar, and singing the Litany of the Virgin, whose intercession with the most High they entreated. It was reasonable, said Aquaviva, turning to his brethren and the novices who had already entered their convent, that the earthly being selected as the shrine, the mother, the protectress of the Infant Messiah, who watched him through life, and whose maternal heart was pierced with many griefs at his death, should possess influence near the throne of the Eternal. That influence, therefore, they solicited in the

most affectionate language. They appealed to her as the Holy Mary, the virgin of virgins, whose bosom was fraught with every good and gracious inspiration—the emblem of purity, destined to be hailed by all nations as the blessed one—the mirror of fidelity and justice, but at the same time the advocate of mercy, distinguished at once by her simplicity and wisdom, her humility and devotion. They hailed her as the mystical rose—the tower that seen afar gave hope to the wearied traveller—the golden mansion that promised him repose—the ark that held the covenant of peace between heaven and earth—the beauteous star of morning issuing from the celestial gate, bearing tidings of strength to the weak, of hope to the afflicted, of pardon to the repentant. She was the queen of the angelic hosts, of the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles. To her they put up their orisons, that she might mediate for them—that to their prayers for the protection of the Most High she might add her own.

“ Oh !” exclaimed Zeinedeen to Kazim, as quitting the chapel while these thrilling words and tones still vibrated on his heart—“ Oh ! how different the occupation of these good men

from that of the barbarians, from whose deadly weapons we have just escaped! How soothing is that sweet music to my soul! The more I see of those holy men, the more I know of the simplicity, the purity of their lives,—the more I feel that they are to our land the harbingers of that truth which it has never known before!”

Mangeli, relieved by the copious tears which these beautiful supplications to the maternal virgin drew from the inmost fountains of her heart, clasped her arms round the neck of her Nourmahal, whom she kissed again and again. Following the impulse of the piety she had just witnessed, she looked up to the heavens, and, kneeling, prayed that her child might be guarded by her who knew the solicitude of a mother, from the many perils by which she was surrounded! Her companions, imitating her example, prostrated themselves on the thymy heath, through which they were passing, and uniting in her fervent petitions, rose with renewed spirit to resume their journey. Zeinedeen's hermitage soon appeared in view; and his gates having been at length passed, the party, feeling assured of their safety, surren-

dered themselves for a few hours to that repose of which they all stood so much in need.

The anxious mind of Kazim did not permit him, however, to prolong his residence at the hermit's abode. He felt it to be his duty to proceed to the camp without delay, to lay before the emperor a statement of the circumstances which he had witnessed, and to recommend that an investigation should be made into the origin of a proceeding so much at variance with the honour of the crown, so contrary to all the recognized rules of warfare, and so fraught with indignity to himself personally. He was not yet fully informed of all that had occurred on that fatal evening of his visit to the subah's castle. The observations made by Zeinedeen in the hall of the palanquins,—the murderous discharge of arms, to which the hermit had nearly fallen a victim in the gallery—the tumult and combats which followed, created indeed in his mind the most painful suspicions as to the participation of Bochari in that dreadful tragedy. Inquiry would speedily bring home the guilt to the real perpetrator, and that inquiry he was resolved to prosecute—the criminal, whoever he was, should suffer for this outrage

upon all divine and human law, otherwise there was no longer any justice to be found in Hindostan. If the emperor were weak enough to permit such enormous iniquity to pass unexpiated, no man of proflity could remain a moment longer in his service.

Full of these noble resolutions, worthy at once of the pupil of Fazeel, of the representative of the house of Ayaz, and of the high chancellor of the empire, Kazim presented himself at an early hour on the following morning, in the imperial pavilion, to which, by reason of his official station, he had always free access. He found there a council already sitting, and engaged in discussing the question whether Chusero was to be instantly executed in the presence of the whole army, as an example to traitors for all time to come, or to be imprisoned for life in the fortress of Gwalior.

Jehangire seemed irresolute—the natural feelings of the parent opposing the sense of impartial justice, by which the sovereign ought to be actuated in such a case. “For,” as Bochari put it, aided by the omrahs, who servilely applauded every word he uttered as the oracles of wisdom,—“how should it be possible for the laws

to inflict due punishment on other offenders against the majesty of the throne, if the leader of the late rebellion—he on whose head was to be laid all the blood shed in consequence of his foul attempt to dethrone his father, were to go unpunished? Peace could never be restored—order could never be established in the empire, where the very throne, assailed by rebellion, was placed as a shield between the rebel and the axe of justice. In this view of the case, he had no doubt the high chancellor would at once coincide.”

Kazim, thus called on to speak his opinion, hesitated not to declare his horror against the crime of treason. The duty imposed upon the emperor in all cases where the guilt of that high crime appeared to be clearly established, was to cause the perpetrators of it to be punished according to the laws. “Had the prince, who I have learned is now a prisoner in the camp, been taken with arms in his hands, and in the act of carrying on war against his lawful sovereign—against his father too—an aggravation which would render the crime still more revolting,—no doubt could be entertained as to the mode in which the question ought to be decided. But the prince was

not taken with arms in his hands, He was not overcome in the field of battle. During a period agreed upon as a truce,—when I was commissioned by my imperial master to proceed to the subah's castle, to act there as a mediator between the emperor and the prince, and to effect a reconciliation upon terms which were propounded in this council-room by the commander himself,—the castle was taken possession of through some stratagem that will through all ages reflect infamy upon its authors:—the truce, to which the honour of the empire was sacredly pledged, was violated with every circumstance of horror that could attend such a departure from all law and decorum; and at a moment when I had received full authority from the prince, as well from Afkun, my brave and noble son——”

“Another arch traitor, my lords,” exclaimed Bochari, rising and drawing his sword. “The chancellor of the empire,—hear ye not this officer of justice speak of the rebel subah, whose blood has already answered for his deeds, as the brave subah—the noble subah? Vengeance, say I, upon all traitors!”

“I know it; my son has perished; I appeal

to my imperial lord,—have I ever palliated his crime ?”

“Let the high chancellor proceed,” said Jehangire. “It is his duty to offer me his advice, and I *will* hear it. Down with these swords; you do but appear as executioners when you thus substitute your weapons for deliberation. In this council all are free to speak their honest opinions. This is not a charnel house, my lords; it is the council-room of your emperor.”

Kazim, overcome by the emotions which the intelligence of the violent death of Afkun had crowded together in his mind, could not proceed for a few moments. Auzeem availed himself of the interval to suggest, that in a matter of so much importance to the welfare of the empire, it were desirable that both the civil and the military authorities should, if possible, act in unison. The country had had experience of the fidelity of their illustrious commander and of the high chancellor; and he hoped that the council would listen to the opinions of those distinguished officers with the respect that was due to them.

Bohari, who was astonished at the momentary energy displayed by Jehangire, affected

to yield to the course pointed out by Auzeem, and restored his sword to its scabbard. The omrahs, his friends, followed his example.

“I never did, I never will, palliate a deed of treason against the state,” resumed Kazim, speaking in a voice somewhat more composed, though still tremulous with the agony of grief that was in his heart. “But it is my duty, as well as my glory, to repeat that I had put an end to the civil war”—

“You!” cried Bochari.

“I,” repeated Kazim. “Here is my authority,” producing a written scroll of paper; “it is signed by the prince.”

“Give it me, give it me,” said Jehangire, rising and almost snatching the paper out of Kazim’s hand. “Oh, my child! yes, it is his signature! he accepts the terms which were offered him,—he submits to his father! Oh Chusero, Chusero! how little you must have known that father’s heart!” he added, pressing the paper to his lips and to his bosom.

“I say, then, my lords,” resumed Kazim, with increasing firmness and dignity, “that the prince has a right to the protection which he has purchased by his submission to the terms

that were proposed to him. For the party who prescribed those conditions, to be the first to violate them, would be to implicate the throne itself in a most flagitious offence against all the laws of honour and good faith, and to lower the emperor to the level of that assassin, who conceived and executed the stratagem through which the fortress was entered, the subah deprived of his life, and the inmates of his harem,—whom every law of Hindostan surrounded with inviolable respect,—massacred without discrimination !”

“What ! Nourmahal, too ?” eagerly inquired Jehangire, rising and putting his hand on his ataghan—

“By a miracle she is safe, sire,” answered Kazim. “The interposition of Heaven in our favour sent to us a good dervish, by whose vigilance we three were rescued from the slaughter, intended, I doubt not, for her, as well as for her mother and myself. But I set no value upon my life, nor is your throne worth the meanest slave in your empire, my sovereign, if the perpetrators of that base massacre remain unpunished. They were in the midst of their rejoicing—as fair—as guileless—as happy an assemblage of unoffend-

ing women as ever graced the sanctuary of a harem, when the arm of the murderer was bared against them within their own walls. Is there a manly heart throughout all Hindostan,—can any living being, invested with the human form, hear of such a horror as this, without feeling every pulse of his life in arms to avenge it?"

"It was a most foul deed," said Jehangire. "Whom do you accuse as the author of it?"

"Suspicion—rumour with a thousand tongues already proclaim the culprit—but it is my office to judge, not to accuse. All that I demand at present is instant investigation upon this subject, before the empire is roused to anger by the diffusion of the intelligence of what has been done. This I demand, as the chief administrator of the laws. I next demand the personal safety of the prince, to which I stand pledged as the mediator, appointed by your majesty to negotiate the peace."

"Spoken rightly, Kazim Ayaz," said the emperor. "Go, tell my son that the conditions to which he has here affixed his name shall be held sacred. Also give the requisite orders

for prosecuting the author of the massacre at the castle; and may Allah forget me if I shall suffer him to contaminate the earth, whoever he may be. The council is dissolved."

CHAPTER IX.

Beware, my Lord—there's treason in the camp.
Go you not forth unarmed : men whisper low,
And shrug their shoulders, and the finger place
Upon the lip mysteriously.

HINDOO DRAMA.

BOCHARI was, for the moment, astounded at the firmness exhibited by the emperor. But he felt that he had no time to lose in taking his measures ; the question now concerned his own personal safety much more than that of the prince, whose life was in the balance a few moments before. Proceeding to his tent with the omrahs, whom he had gained over to his party by largesses, and promises of high promotion, he charged two of them to take Chusero under their care, and attended by an escort of Orcha rajaputs, whom he had lately

taken into his private pay, to set out at once for the fortress of Gwalior, where they were to detain the prince until further orders.

These arrangements were put into a course of execution with so much expedition, that before the high-chancellor could discover the tent in which the prisoner had been confined, since his arrival in the camp, the latter was on his way to the prison designed for him by Bochari.

But the precautions of the Persian did not stop here. The presence of Kazim in the camp, instead of being any longer subservient to his purposes, was calculated, on the contrary, in every way to thwart them. The ascendancy of that dignitary in the council, was already apparent; and the new position in which the death of the subah had placed Nourmahal, would, of necessity, add so materially to the chancellor's influence over the mind of the emperor, that all would be lost unless the most vigorous steps were adopted, and that too without a moment's deliberation. Bochari having intimated these dangers to his confederate omrahs and rajaputs, they assembled together in his tent.

“ You are perfectly aware, my friends,” said he, “ that whatever outcry may be raised against us for the contrivance to which we were obliged to have recourse, in order to obtain an entrance into the subah’s castle, it was one without which that fortress, in itself impregnable, never could have been captured. The results justify all that we have done.”

To this assertion his associates readily assented.

“ I pledged myself to participate with you in the perils of that enterprise. I was the first to quit the palanquins, to reconnoitre the apartments of the castle, and to advance into the gallery. I have the happiness to believe, that it was chiefly through my discharge the arch-traitor fell. You know that I apprehended Chusero with my own hand—and you will do me the justice to believe, that no motives, except those arising from my deep interest in the welfare of the empire, and my determination, that you shall receive the great rewards due to you for your zealous co-operation with me on this important occasion, could have induced me to expose your safety and my own to the hazards, in which for several hours we were

involved. Had we been discovered before the moment for action arrived, can you doubt that we, and not the enemies of the emperor, should have been the victims?"

"It was but the turn of the dice," said one of the omrahs. "We won—and we must now maintain our position, or we shall soon be trampled in the dust."

"The high-chancellor, you have observed—you, my lords, who were present just now in the council—completely controls the emperor. Nourmahal's charms—and all must acknowledge that they are unrivalled—will place the empire entirely at the feet of that family. There is no act of sorcery which she will not put into requisition, in order to prepare her way to the throne."

The rajaputs drew their scymitars, and evinced, by their manner, that they were prepared to execute any directions which the commander would be pleased to give them.

"No, not yet. The moment has not arrived for measures of this description. We cannot but know, that however hateful to us the chancellor may be, and however incompatible with our just hopes his influence with the emperor,

there is a certain weight attached to his name and office, which might operate to our prejudice if we were known to have adopted any steps against him of a summary nature."

"His language in the council," remarked one of the omrahs, "is not to be tolerated. It was clearly treasonable."

"Treasonable, beyond all doubt," said Bochari; "and Nourmahal can also be considered in no other light than as a principal actor in the late rebellion, seeing that she remained in the castle during the time, when her consort was engaged in actual revolt against the emperor upon the Sutledge, and afterwards at Lahore."

"Moreover," added the omrah, who had spoken before, "has she not now fled, instead of submitting to the emperor, as it would have become a faithful subject to do?"

"Our duty, therefore, is," said Bochari, "to place the father and daughter under arrest—to have them conveyed to Agra, whither the emperor and army will forthwith return—to have the culprits regularly arraigned for high treason—and to impose the responsibility of convicting or acquitting them upon the lawful tribunals of the empire."

A buzz of approbation followed this suggestion, and measures were taken on the instant for acting in conformity with it. But before the confederates separated, they asked what course was to be adopted, in case the emperor should not give his assent to these proceedings.

“Leave that to me,” said Bochari; “I will secure you against any opposition in that quarter.”

The high chancellor, who had gone forth from the emperor’s pavilion in search of the prince, speedily returned with an account that Chusero had been just seen to quit the camp, attended by a body of rajaputs. Jehangire immediately directed the commander to be summoned to his presence; but the officer despatched on that duty, having been prevented for some time from approaching Bochari’s tent by the guards surrounding it, he was obliged to wait until the confederate council was broken up. Bochari did not hesitate to obey the summons.

“What have you done with my son, slave?” exclaimed the emperor, in violent agitation.

“That which was due to his rank, and to your wishes, sire,” answered Bochari, with consummate coolness.

“ Explain.”

“ It was your majesty’s pleasure that his life should be preserved. Your standard is planted on the citadel of the castle. There is no longer a rebel force in this province. The army, having nothing further to do here, is preparing to accompany your majesty to your capital, where the exigencies of public affairs demand your presence. The prince has preceded you, attended only by an escort suitable to his station, and I am here, your slave, as you deign to designate me, ready to execute your majesty’s farther orders.”

Jehangire looked bewildered. He examined Bochari’s countenance for a moment or two, not knowing whether he should credit this statement, or order the Persian under arrest.

“ Why was my son not brought to me, at all events, before he quitted the camp? Did you not know how I loved him? Did you never feel the yearning of a father’s heart to behold the countenance of a long lost child?”

“ It was his own desire to postpone the meeting for some days. His sense of shame, he said—”

“ Let him be recalled—take horse, my lords,”

said Jehangire, turning to two of the omrahs in waiting; "fly after my son with the speed of lightning. Bring him thither; he shall go with me to Agra, in my palanquin. Insolent man, to assume this authority without even consulting me."

The omrahs proceeded to execute the emperor's mandate; but they returned in a few minutes to his presence, and stated that the square outside the pavilion was densely crowded with cavalry, who would not permit them to pass through.

Bochari turned pale, but still remained firm.

The omrahs drew their swords, and placing themselves between the emperor and the commander, declared their belief that designs were entertained against his majesty's life. They entreated him to retire. Jehangire, hearing a tumult without, drew his knife, and cutting his way through the screen of the pavilion, entered the bathing-tent which was behind his sleeping apartment. Meantime the pavilion was filled with armed men.

"I accuse Kazim Ayaz of high treason," said Bochari, in a loud and commanding voice. "Guards, do your duty!" The chancellor

was immediately surrounded by rajaputs. The commander, followed by several of the confederate omrahs, with drawn swords, went in search of the emperor, who, having called all the attendants in waiting to his assistance, appeared in front of them with his bared scymitar, resolved to defend himself to the last. He raised the weapon to attack Bochari, when, perceiving that his nobles and attendants were disarmed by the intruders, he dropped his point and said, "I am betrayed."

"Say, on the contrary, my sovereign, that you are saved—saved from machinations of which you had no conception."

"What is the meaning of all this? What have I done, that I am placed in this situation?"

"Conspirators had planned your destruction, sire. We have frustrated their designs. The moment it was known that the prince had arrived a prisoner in the camp, many of the omrahs, who had throughout the war taken every occasion to exhibit their malignity against me, sought his presence, and tendered him their allegiance. Your chancellor, even in the council, dared to throw out the most infamous

insinuations against me ; your life—my life—were no longer secure from danger.”

“ For myself I have no fear,” said the emperor. “ The attachment of the nobles to my son, is but a pledge of their fidelity to me—a fidelity too, of which I have too many proofs to doubt it for a moment.”

“ If your majesty feel so assured upon this point, then all that it remains for me to do is to place myself under your protection.”

“ Be certain of that. Is there any thing further which you can desire ? If not, it is my pleasure that you should withdraw.”

“ These omrahs, also, who stand behind me.”

“ What do they require ?”

“ Full security for themselves and for me ; without it we will not retire.”

“ Name your terms, Bochari. I did not expect this treatment from you. I have always appreciated your services.”

“ Your words in the council, sire—your words in the pavilion, when you were pleased to vilify me by the appellation of slave, did not indicate a very strong remembrance of my poor services to the empire.”

“ I OWN I was offended—outraged in my feelings by the sudden removal of my son.”

“ Nay, sire, I presume not to make any remark upon your strange language, or stranger manner to me—a traitor was by your side to whom I impute both.”

An officer here entered the tent, and having informed the commander that the troops were on the march, that all the tents were struck, and that persons were in waiting to take down his majesty’s pavilion, Bochari ordered his horses to be brought.

“ These proceedings,” said Jehangire, “ are altogether most extraordinary. Well, let my horses be brought also.”

“ Sire! mine are wholly at your service.”

“ If I be still emperor of Hindostan, and have a horse which I can call my own, I shall mount him.”

Jehangire’s desire, upon this point, having been complied with, he and Bochari rode slowly away together in the midst of a strong troop of Orcha rajaputs, but in a direction different from that which the great body of the army had taken.

CHAPTER X.

Oh, Death! Death! Thou art a great avenger.
'Tis when thy arrow hath thy victim pierced,
That those, who mourn the lost, begin to know
His virtues, and remember in their heart
Of hearts how oft they caused the needless tear
To stain the cheek that ne'er shall blush again.

MINHAGE.

UPON his departure from the hermitage for the imperial camp, Kazim assured Mangeli, that if he did not return thither in the course of the day, he would despatch a messenger to give an account to her of his proceedings. He possessed, however, no means of accomplishing his promise. The rajaputs, to whose custody he was consigned by Bochari, though they treated him personally with respect, stated that they

had no orders to forward communications from him to any person whomsoever, and that their duty was limited to attendance upon him until his arrival at Agra. Astonished at this intelligence, and alarmed for the effect which his continued absence and silence might produce upon the already too much agitated mind of Mangeli he entreated, at all events, that he might be permitted to see his wife and daughter before departing for the capital. He was told that the ladies would probably be at Agra before him, as swift-paced elephants had been already placed at their disposal, in order to enable them to return thither with as little delay as possible.

Kazim needed no reflection to feel assured that he was now, with his family, altogether in the hands of Bochari. He saw that, throughout all the occurrences which had recently taken place, he had been an instrument in the hands of that base and remorseless man. As to his personal safety, he thought no more of it. Doubtless measures were taken for sacrificing him, and having no longer any mode of avoiding his fate, he resigned himself to the decrees of Providence. But to be separated at such a

moment from Mangeli and Nourmahal was, indeed, a thought full of anxiety and grief. Could he be assured that they were treated with ordinary respect,—could he be certain that they were yet in existence,—even information to this extent would quiet the pangs that every moment shot through his brain, threatening to bear away all the power of reason. But the officer in command of the rajaputs was inexorable. No entreaty could induce him to comply with Kazim's desire for gaining intelligence upon these points. They rode on night and day, except for a few hours after noon-tide, sometimes on the public road, more frequently through the bye-paths, taking the shortest course they could find towards Agra.

Kazim's feelings told him accurately what those of his consort and daughter were, under the circumstances in which they were placed. They agreed, without hesitation, in the opinion that his duty to the empire imposed upon him the necessity of losing no time in repairing to the camp, and in demanding a full and an immediate investigation into the origin of the massacre which had taken place at the castle. Zeinedeen already apprised them of the con-

clusions at which *his* mind had arrived as to the stratagem which was practised by Bochari, with a view to obtain possession of the castle. But he concealed from them the apprehensions which he could not help entertaining, that the tragedy was designed to comprehend Nourmahal, as well as the prince and the subah, if not even the chancellor, whose integrity and great popularity must have been felt by Bochari as a continual reproach upon his own character.

The distance of the imperial camp from the hermitage was not considerable. It might easily be traversed by a horseman in an hour or two. As the morning wore away without any letters from Kazim, uneasiness became more and more wildly pictured upon Mangeli's countenance. Zeinedeen took them to the summit of the tower, whence they could clearly see Kazim, if he were returning, or any messengers despatched with communications for them. But they could discern no object moving in any direction that led to the hermitage.

Now and then a trooper galloped out from the camp, and having watered his horse at a brook, that tumbled down the hill-side, where the tents were erected, seemed preparing to

cross it. But he instantly returned the same way. Once or twice spearmen were seen moving beyond the outposts. They crossed the brook ; after washing their feet, they hastened over the plain ; but they then turned towards the castle, for the garrison of which they appeared to be charged with some instructions. Peasants also occasionally passed through the lines, again over the brook into the plain, and upon the very path that led to the hermitage. But they were speedily lost sight of.

All Mangeli's terrors of the preceding night were rapidly returning upon her senses. Nourmahal endeavoured to soothe her mother's alarm by every suggestion she could make. But between watching at the window for the appearance of her father, or of a messenger from him, and the attentions of which her beloved parent stood so much in need, she became almost distracted. Zeinedeen walked up and down in the apartment where they were, his arms folded, and occasionally offering hopes, and advising patience, which were very far from his own breast. Matters, he plainly saw, were, from one quarter of an hour to another, assuming a more sinister appearance, and it occurred to him that

in not taking steps for conveying Mangeli and Nourmahal from the hermitage, he was not acting with his ordinary discretion.

At length the approach of a troop of horsemen was announced by Nourmahal. Zeinedeen looked out, and observing that they were galloping with all the rapidity they could command, he lost no further time in urging his companions to go with him to a place of safety.

His intention was to lead them, by a secret passage at the foot of the stair-case, to a subterranean chamber, where they might remain until the object of the troopers in coming to the hermitage should be known.

Unhappily, Mangeli, at the moment, fell into her daughter's arms in a swoon. Nourmahal, overwhelmed by anxiety for her mother, could not be made to comprehend the necessity of yielding instant obedience to the advice of Zeinedeen. Mangeli breathed again. The trampling of the horses was heard. The hermit, taking both his companions by the hand, conducted them to the staircase, but before he descended half-way, he found it crowded with officers, whose long scabbards clattered on the

steps as they were hastening upwards in search of his guests.

The hermit and his trembling companions were obliged to return to the chamber they had just left. They were followed by the strangers. One of the officers to whom the persons of Nourmahal and her mother were well known, after paying them his homage in the most respectful manner, stated that orders had been given for the immediate breaking up of the encampment, and the return of the army to Agra; that the emperor, after making arrangements for the future government of Cashmere, had already set out for the capital, attended by the commander and the high chancellor; and that the guards now in waiting were commissioned to attend upon their highnesses on their journey homewards.

This communication, made with an air of soldierly frankness and sincerity, tended in no small degree to confirm the apprehensions which the first announcement of the approach of the troops had kindled in the hermit's mind.

"You have, of course," he said, "letters from the high chancellor to his family."

"I have no letters," answered the officer;

“nor am I aware that any of my comrades have been charged with any other communication than that which I have now made. Swift elephants will be here presently with palanquins, and as the emperor and chancellor cannot be far on their road, I should hope that we may easily overtake them in a few hours.

“I own,” said Zeinedeen, “I am surprised that the chancellor was not deputed by the emperor to take charge of his own family, or, at all events, that you have no written, or even verbal communication from him.”

“There seemed to have been little time for ceremony of any sort this morning; for such was the suddenness with which the orders for the march of the troops were given, and put into execution, that we have been most of us obliged to entrust the collection and care of our baggage to the sutlers of the camp, many of whom, as perhaps you know, are very little to be depended upon.”

Mangeli and her daughter, having retired to a recess in one of the windows, listened to this conversation with painful attention. The arrival of the palanquins having been announced, they, however, had now no alternative. It was

not in Zeinedeen's power, even had he wished it, to defer their departure. They were informed that there were two palanquins at their disposal; but that if they preferred proceeding together in the same vehicle, they were perfectly at liberty to indulge their wishes on that point. They might, moreover, rest assured of meeting from the escort, appointed to accompany them, every possible attention.

Zeinedeen's fears were, in a great measure, disarmed by these assurances. Still a sense of disquietude lingered in his mind, which he in vain exerted himself to compose. When the cavalcade was declared to be ready for departure, Mangeli gave him her hand, fully expecting that he would accompany them to Agra. The thought had not before occurred to him. He mentioned her wishes to the officer in command, who, without hesitation, declared that he knew of no objection that could be offered to that course. A palanquin would be at the hermit's service, if he chose to accept it.

Zeinedeen yielded to Mangeli's entreaties, enforced as they were by those of Nourmahal, and by the solicitude with which his thoughts were filled for the fate of Kazim. Having in-

formed his domestics of his intention, and desired them, however, to be prepared for his speedy return, he affectionately bade them farewell.

Poor old Chunder was sadly grieved at the departure of his beloved master. If he had tears he would have wept, but he could not. He was sure they would never meet again. Holding Zeinedeen's hands in his, he kissed them, and prayed that Allah might protect him, and shower upon his head every good gift. He would allow nobody to assist him in raising his master to the palanquin,—a service, indeed, which he was ill able to perform. But the old man's affection was allowed by the escort to have its way.

All the preparations for the departure of the cavalcade having been at length completed, it proceeded on its route. The lattices of the palanquin in which Nourmahal and her mother reclined, were carefully veiled, and female slaves were in readiness to wait upon them; so far as their personal convenience was concerned, they found that every arrangement had been provided necessary for a long journey.

Under other circumstances, the expectation

of returning once more to "dear Agra," as she often loved to call it, would have awakened in Nourmahal's bosom its most fervent emotions of rapture. But what a world of reflections crowded upon her, as she passed by the castle lately her residence, now no longer ruled by the subah! It had been to her the scene of much suffering,—of many, many a gloomy hour, through which the rays of sunshine, that now and then struggled through them, were indeed but few!

Her mother deeply sympathised with her in all the tears which the retrospect of that scene called forth. They were tears of bitter sorrow. It was now at last admitted by her once cold and alienated heart, that she ought to have loved the husband who knew no joy on earth which did not derive its light from her. His every look of tenderness, to which, in life, she was indifferent; his timid advances towards hope that she would love him, which she had repelled; his generous abstinence from the slightest exhibition of unkindness, from even a gesture that could be construed into reproach, —these and a thousand other recollections now

gathered in dense array before her, and demanded, if not vengeance, at least expiation.

Nourmahal never was inclined to conceal from herself the merits of Afkun's character. His faults, if any she had known, were now forgotten. Her memory was active in shadowing out every particular transaction, in which the part of the sufferer fell to his share, in consequence of apathy on her side. Many were the instances in which she now acknowledged that she showed him too little forbearance; many those in which, by a slight act of assiduity, she might have spared him pain. His spirit looked upon her placidly, telling her that he forgave all; but it was this very meekness which wrung her heart with anguish.

Would that the warrior had indeed heard the sobs of remorse which escaped from that once proud breast, as pressing her head upon her mother's lap she yielded to all the intensity of a widow's grief! She mourned, not because she had ever felt for him the sentiment of love. It would have been hypocrisy to have attributed her agony to any such source. Nature, destiny, circumstances, for which it would have been unjust to blame that beautiful woman,

denied to her the faculty of loving more than one being, who for good or for evil was appointed to absorb all that she could ever know of that divine emotion.

No ; Nourmahal mourned because she had no longer the opportunity of repaying Afkun, as far as she might have done, any measure of the gratitude which she owed him for all his true enduring love, for all his god-like generosity,—the remembrance of which, now that he was no more, pierced her soul like a barbed arrow.

CHAPTER X.

The worse the ill that fate on noble souls
Inflicts, the more their firmness; and they arm
Their spirits with adamant to meet the blow.

HINDOO PLAY.

As the escort pursued their journey from day to day, they were occasionally joined by stragglers from the main body of the army, who seemed full of some extraordinary intelligence, which they communicated in whispers, and with many shrugs of the shoulder to the officers. The frequent occurrence of those communications, and the mysterious manner in which the officers appeared to converse about them, amongst themselves, attracted the observation, and renewed the alarm of Zeinedeen. He more than once distinctly overhead the words "high

treason" connected with Kazim's name. Nourmahal's name also was often mentioned. He saw, moreover, that after the officers received this intelligence, whatever it was, they became more rigid in enforcing discipline amongst the escort.

During the halts of the first day, Mangeli often inquired whether they were yet in sight of the imperial guards, who would be easily distinguishable by their begla plumes from the other regiments of the army. But nothing of the kind was observable. Upon the route, by which she was travelling, few objects were to be seen moving, except the soldiers by whom her palanquin were attended. She counted the hours with the most harassing anxiety, as they passed one after another, without realizing the expectation she had been led to entertain, that they would speedily overtake the imperial suite, and be under the protection of her husband. At every halt she grew more and more impatient. Her foreboding fears were shared by Nourmahal, who, after the first outbursts of grief, with which her heart had been overladen, applied all the energies she could command to control her apprehensions, and to wear upon her

countenance, for the encouragement and consolation of her agonised mother, some degree of calmness.

After the difficult descents of Pees-Punchal, and the Bember were passed, the travellers had still many wearisome days before them, until they embarked on the Jumna. Nothing was yet heard of the emperor, or the chancellor, beyond vague reports, that they were not with the army, which took the road to Lahore, but that they might be expected shortly to arrive at Agra. Mangeli, as well as Nourmahal, appeared to feel considerable relief on entering the vessel which was to convey them down the river. They had suffered much fatigue from the heavy, and, at the same time, rapid movements of the elephants, and from their close confinement within the palanquins. They had now a cabin assigned to their own use, to which, on their request, Zeinedeen was permitted unreserved access. His presence lent them fortitude, even when his conversation failed to beguile them of the fears, by which they continued to be affected concerning Kazim.

The lofty minarets, and domes of the capital, at length announced the termination of their

journey. They naturally expected to be conveyed by water to the marble steps, which led from the shore of the Jumna to the chancellor's palace; but the officer, under whose care they had been placed, stated that he had no orders to that effect. His instructions, he said, which he was bound rigidly to obey, mentioned particular apartments in one of the castles of the citadel, which were prepared for their accommodation, until the arrival of the chancellor. Zeinedeen did not conceal his surprise at this arrangement. Still he had no advice to offer, but continued patience and resignation to the will of Providence, who would doubtless sooner or later put a period to their disappointments.

The astonishment of the good hermit, and the sense of alarm which continued to prey upon the spirits of the mother and daughter, were far from being mitigated, when upon being handed over by the commander of the escort to the governor of the citadel, to whom at the same time the former delivered a letter under the imperial seal, the wearied travellers were conducted to a quarter of the citadel, which appeared to be the residence of the lowest menials

attached to the service of the imperial palace. The chamber, into which they were first shown, was lighted only by a small narrow window near the ceiling. Even that solitary window had a strong iron bar running down the middle, which not only added to the dimness of the apartment, but explained to them at once their real situation.

“Are we then prisoners?” asked Nourmahal, turning to the governor, after she had rapidly surveyed the chamber.

“My office has often been a painful one,” he replied, “but never more so than at this moment. The orders which I have received from the emperor——”

“From the emperor?”

“From the emperor.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Nourmahal.

“The seal and the signature leave no room for doubt upon that point. Here is the imperial warrant, which I am bound at the peril of my head to put into execution.”

“Oh! it must be some mistake. Jehangire would never think of assigning to Nourmahal such an apartment as this,—it must be some cruel imposition.”

Zeinedeen asked permission to look at the document, which he immediately returned to the governor, observing that there seemed to be no reason to doubt its authenticity.

“You see here, however,” added the governor, “the worst of your apartments. There are others connected with it, which are much more spacious and cheerful, and overlook the river; but they will not be prepared for your use until to-morrow, as I was not apprised, until the very moment of your arrival, that personages of so much distinction were to be lodged in this wing of the citadel.”

“Every new circumstance of this business appears more inexplicable than the one by which it is preceded,” said Zeinedeen. “Do you know if the emperor be yet arrived?”

“His majesty is not yet arrived,” answered the governor, “but he is expected early to-morrow morning.”

“That, at all events, is something,” said Nourmahal, pressing her mother to her bosom. “The enigma will soon be solved—the suspense—dearest and best of mothers,” she added, fervidly kissing her pallid cheeks—“in which we must spend the night, will be of no great

duration. The high chancellor, sir, is he with the emperor?"

"So the last couriers say."

"You hear that, mother? *He* is safe at all events. He will, indeed, be surprised to find us in this prison. You, of course, know, sir, that this is the consort, and I am the daughter of Kazim Ayas."

"I should have known that, even had your names not been set forth in the warrant."

It afforded Zeinedeen some relief to observe that Nourmahal's natural fortitude of mind had not abandoned her on this trying occasion; that, on the contrary, it seemed growing upon her with each new difficulty, which this sudden reverse of her fortunes presented to her view. He most anxiously aided her in the exertions she made to infuse her own courage into the bosom of her mother; but the mind of Mangeli was cast in a different mould. She was altogether an instrument played upon by the affections. "Were but Kazim with me," she repeated a thousand times, "I could endure any thing. But separate from him I am nothing. I know not what to do or to say. I have no sense of any thing going on around me. I feel that

my child is here," she added, pausing, and looking steadfastly into Nourmahal's eyes. "Oh, thanks to Alla!—Yes, my beloved child! born to me in the desert, with no covering to protect thee save the coiled serpent,—no pillow to sustain thee, save the burning sand,—no food to nurture thee in this dried up bosom,—the howling blast for thy lullaby,—and for thy nurse, the horrid vulture! Oh, God, be again and again adored! We were then guarded by Thy merciful hand!"

"And will be guarded still by Him, mother! Be comforted, to-morrow, to-morrow must end our woes."

The governor, who was himself a parent, could not witness this scene without a degree of emotion, which he in vain endeavoured to repress. Drawing Zeinedeen aside, he told him in a low voice, interrupted by pangs which choked his utterance, that he would see if, by any exertion he could make, the other rooms belonging to that suite could be placed at their disposal before night. Warmly pressing the hermit's arm, as a token of the interest which he felt in their behalf, he quitted the chamber, locking the door after him as

gently as possible, to prevent them from hearing that most dismal of all sounds, the shooting of the bolt that announces the loss of liberty.

The only article of furniture which Zeinedeen could discover in the prison where they now stood, was a low divan close to the bare wall, constructed of wood, and a thin ragged cushion. The floor appeared to be composed of hard clay. Drawing Nourmahal and her mother towards the divan, he persuaded them to rest there for a while, and await the result of the efforts of the governor, who, he had no doubt, was disposed to render them all the service in his power.

During the journey from Cashmere to Agra, the hermit collected from several members of the escort, with whom he conversed whenever the halts permitted him to do so, various particulars concerning the sanguinary scenes which had been perpetrated at the fortress of Kebeer. These particulars he now took an opportunity of detailing to Mangeli and Nourmahal, hoping that if they could give their attention to the relation of woes much more grievous than their own, they might be gradually prepared for the privations to which he clearly foresaw they

were now doomed for some time. The death of Kanun particularly affected her mistress. The circumstances with which it was attended, were calculated to touch her heart. She was much attached to that girl, whom, though originally placed in attendance upon her as a slave, she considered in the light of a sister. Far from entertaining any impulse of jealousy, on hearing of the passion which Kanun had secretly cherished for Afkun, she only wondered that she had not herself observed it at an earlier period. Many little circumstances now occurred to her recollection, which confirmed all Zeinedeen had heard upon that subject; and it was even some consolation to her to know, that in his last moments the subah was not wholly abandoned to the merciless outlaws by whose hands he fell. It was some balm to her troubled spirit to think, that the attendant whom she best loved, clung to her suffering consort on that occasion, and rendered him the last services which he was capable of receiving.

For the many other innocent victims of that dreadful night, Nourmahal expressed deep regret. She called to mind, and mentioned to her mother, the various traits of amiability by

which they were distinguished, and the brilliant talents they occasionally displayed, which required nothing more than education to render them perfect.

But these details speedily led to the conclusion, that the annals of Hindostan had furnished no instance of treachery more disgraceful to its authors, than that by which the fortress was gained to the emperor. Zeinedeen expressed his entire conviction, that Jehangire could have known nothing of the nature of the presents, which were conveyed within the walls in the fatal palanquins. Rumour universally ascribed the contrivance of that iniquitous scheme to the mind of Bochari, to which every base device, every species of crime, was known to be familiar.

“It is impossible, therefore, to doubt,” said Nourmahal, “that it is to the Persian we are to attribute the position in which we are now placed. It clearly entered into his designs to involve the whole of us in destruction on that terrible night. The deed once consummated, it could not be recalled; and by the power which he unhappily possesses, he would have easily put an end to all inquiries about us. But Alla

having, through your instrumentality, Zeinedeen, protected us from the machinations of that murderous scene, he durst not venture to attack us again through the same kind of warfare. No doubt he now seeks to accomplish his purpose by some other means."

"Bochari is, indeed, to be dreaded," observed the hermit. "But there is an eye above us all, from which nothing can be concealed—an arm which, sooner or later, is sure to overtake and strike down the murderer. The Persian will, probably, fabricate some charge—indeed it is currently reported, that he has already prepared an accusation of high-treason against the chancellor."

"Oh! that he would dare to charge my husband with treason to the state," exclaimed Mangeli, with an unwonted degree of energy. "Oh! that the Persian would venture on such an accusation as that! There is not a child in Hindostan, who does not know Kazim's true attachment to the emperor, and to the people under his sceptre! The day of that trial would be the last that Bochari ever would see. No troops could protect him from the indig-

nation of the inhabitants of Agra, from the first omrah down to the lowest slave !”

“ It is publicly said, that the emperor himself is nothing more or less than a captive in the hands of Bochari,” added Zeinedeen. “ On leaving the camp his majesty rode unarmed by the side of the Persian, and surrounded by a troop of Orcha rajaputs.”

“ Orcha rajaputs ?” asked Mangeli.

“ So I am informed.”

“ Those are the assassins, by whose hands Abul Fazeel, our beloved friend, perished, when on his way to the Deccan,” added Mangeli.

Nourmahal had not heard before of the death of Fazeel. The name arrested her attention, for she had heard it recently pronounced in a tone she was not likely to forget. She inquired minutely into all the particulars of that transaction, which her mother related as far as she knew them.

The governor at length re-appeared, followed by slaves with lights, his beaming countenance indicating the pleasure which he said he felt in having succeeded, in obtaining better accommodation for them than those which that miserable chamber afforded. Proceeding to a

door, opposite to the one by which he entered, he opened it, and conducted Nourmahal and her mother to a spacious apartment plainly carpeted, but furnished with divans, cushions, and mattresses, sufficient for their use. This room communicated with another, which, he added, would also be at their service, and overlooked the Jumna, as they would perceive when the day-light should return. A frugal supper was then placed before them, of which, however, they were none of them in spirits to partake.

It was arranged, that Zeinedeen should avail himself of the hospitable offer made by the governor of a suitable residence during the time he might feel disposed to remain in Agra. The party then separated for the night—Mangeli and Nourmahal consigning themselves to mattresses, placed close to each other, little solicitous, however, of repose, which they had no wish to enjoy, until they should be assured of the return and the safety of the chancellor.

CHAPTER XI.

May Heaven preserve your gentle heart
From every sorrow mortals know!
What joys this world can here impart,
And what the next, may each bestow.

HAFIZ.

NEVER was the return of morning expected with more anxiety by Nourmahal, than during that night, which to her, particularly, appeared as if it would never end. For the first hour or two she sustained her mother's head upon her arm. Perceiving that her dear parent, overwhelmed by the fatigue and pain she had endured, gradually lapsed into sleep, she gently

withdrew her arm, and substituting a cushion for it rose from the mattress, with a view to penetrate to the apartment, which, as the governor said, overlooked the Jumna.

Taking in her hand a small lamp, which one of the slaves had left on the floor, she proceeded bare-footed, listening, now and then, to ascertain that her mother remained undisturbed, and, passing into an outer room, discovered that the only window it contained was strongly secured by an iron lattice within, and by shutters that opened on the outside. It occurred to her that, as was usually the case on the river, where external access to the shutters would be inconvenient, they were under the control of a spring-bolt, fixed in some part of the frame of the window within. After searching carefully at both sides of the frame, she failed to find any indication of the spring, and was about to give up the object of her pursuit in despair, when the light of the lamp gleamed on a brass ring, suspended in one of the squares of the lattice. On her pulling this ring, the bolt by which the shutters were made fast, immediately receded from its

place, they flew back, and disclosed the river tranquilly flowing beneath.

The canopy of the heavens exhibited myriads of suns of other worlds, shining with that clear and intense brightness, which still indicated that the night was scarcely half way through its course. Nourmahal gazed on them earnestly, as if she would intreat them to pale their light, and make way for the morning. But they continued to assert their dominion over the earth, shining through a sky without a cloud, azure from the horizon to the zenith, without a break prophetic of the day that was still to come. She sat listening to the current, that now and then gently rippled as it passed by, without disturbing, even by a murmur, the profound silence that reigned every where around.

Putting the lamp down she sat in the window, and clasping her hands fervently, prayed to the Creator of those glorious orbs, whose admirable harmony gave token every moment of his perpetual presence and power, that he would look down upon her beloved parents, and preserve them from the persecutions to which, she feared, they were about to be subjected.

While these tacit supplications occupied her whole mind, the chill of the night-air passed with a tremor through her thinly-covered limbs. Returning to her mattress, she found her mother still sleeping. Kneeling by her side, she renewed her prayer. Undesirous even of a moment's repose, she resumed her usual apparel, and again took her place at the window, to watch for the earliest indications of the dawn. But the stars appeared to have lost not a ray of their lustre. The transparent azure of the firmament was still perfectly undisturbed, as far as her limited range of vision could enable her to observe.

Leaning her cheek upon her hand, she gave herself up to the thousand thoughts that pressed upon her unquiet mind. "Is all this a dream?" she asked herself. "Am I once more in Agra? Is this the Jumna, upon whose banks I have spent so many days of happiness;—ah! of true happiness,—when I knew no feeling save intense love for my dear parents, and had no care, except what was brought upon me by my gazelles and favourite flowers?"

"In Agra! in the citadel! within the same walls that inclose the emperor's palace, and

yet in a prison!—and for what? What have I done to call for such treatment as this? Whom have I offended? The emperor? It is by his order, and under his signature, that my beloved mother and I have been sent to this dreary abode! When I last saw him, how little did I expect this!

“But it cannot be his act. It cannot be that Jehangire has willingly affixed his signature to any decree against me. He has been imposed upon by some wicked invention. My life upon it, Bochari is the author of this proceeding. I know not what my father may have said in the council to draw upon him that bad man’s wrath. Kazim’s noble soul would disdain to hide the indignation he felt, at the flagitious stratagem by which the fortress was entered. It is not improbable that high words passed between them, and that something fell from my father capable of being misinterpreted. But I, —what have I said? what deed have I even attempted, to palliate any accusation against me?

“No matter; I suffer with my parents. I share their destiny, whatever it may be. That is a consolation. To be united with them in the residence of misery,—if misery is to come,—oh,

how infinitely more acceptable is it to me than all the splendour which Hindostan can afford!

“The vision of life is then passed. There was a time when Nourmahal looked forward to other scenes, painted by her glowing fancy in ethereal colours which she thought could never deceive her, could never fade. Alas! those bright hallucinations have vanished. But a little month ago the vice queen of Cashmere, now a prisoner in the meanest part of the seraglio! But a little month ago worshipped by the supreme lord of Hindostan,—*worshipped*, why should I not say it? and now reduced below the condition of a slave!

“They will doubtless apply against my father all the machinery of falsehood. He knows not how to meet such an adversary as Bochari. He will exhibit his ingenuous and stainless forehead without a shield to ward off their arrows. They will degrade him from his high office. They will endeavour to tarnish his splendid name. They will confiscate his wealth, and reduce him to mendicancy; no, not to mendicancy,—that they shall never do, while Nourmahal has a hand to labour for him.

“It is now I ought to thank thee, God! for

having endowed me with gifts which may enable me to administer to the support of my beloved parents. Even though in prison my mind is free, my hands are unshackled. Zeine-deen shall be our steward. I can work; I can make dresses for the courtly dames, I can get a tambour and make tapestry, I can flower muslins and brocades. Our wants will be but few; we are not unacquainted with poverty, and we may still be happy, if our enemies do but leave us together.

“ My mother will at first feel these vicissitudes deeply,—not for her own sake, but for ours. My father can take to his books again. He may find ample occupation in writing the story of his own eventful life; he may, perhaps, add to it some of the scenes which his daughter has witnessed during her short career; and haply the day may come when the fates of Kazim Ayas and Nourmahal shall afford entertainment, if not instruction, to distant nations. Oh, those alone who have truly loved will know how to appreciate the difficulties in which she has been placed! They will not say that Nourmahal had no heart because she could not dispose of it at will,—because she could not

transfer it from one shrine to another, as if it were a victim that could be renewed!

“Poetry, music, painting, oh divine arts! oh possessions beyond the control of the tyrant’s animosity! these shall be our lights to cheer our prison-home, and to win even my weeping mother back to her beautiful smiles!

“Hush! what step was that? does my mother wake? I shall see. No; she breathes lowly, quietly. Thanks to Heaven! she will rise refreshed. It is near again. Not a footstep, it is the fall of the oar on the waters. It approaches. I may, perhaps, see it through the window if it be a boat. Yes. There it moves rapidly down the middle of the stream, almost like a phantom on the waters. The night, methinks, has grown darker. The stars have nearly all gone out, and those that remain seem shorn of more than half their brilliancy. It feels colder too. Oh, welcome sight! A greyish hue is in the east. It is expanding gradually on each side, and rising higher and higher. The stars have wholly vanished. The mysterious hand of Time is throwing back the curtains of night. How regal are those folds of their lining which I see, all gold and purple!

There he comes ! the glorious sun ! a god bounding up the arches of space, dispensing joy to all creatures, to all save the doomed family of Ayas !

Nourmahal had scarcely turned from the window when her footsteps were arrested by a sudden blast of trumpets, followed by numerous volleys of artillery. These were the well known heralds that proclaimed to all Agra the entry of the emperor into his palace. She had no occasion to awake her mother to listen to these sounds: Her unhappy parent was already roused from her lethargy, for such it was, rather than sleep, in which her senses were wrapped during the greater portion of the night. Looking vacantly around her, she asked, "Where am I? What place is this? Ah! my Nourmahal—thee—thee, I know, my beloved. Where thou art it must be our home! But your father. Has he risen? Has he gone to the council? Nay; I do not remember that he was here in the night. Tell me!—oh, my child! tell me, where is thy father, or I shall go distracted? These walls—this chamber—these cushions;—all are strange to me. Where are we?"

“ In Agra, dearest mother.”

“ In Agra? Impossible! In Agra! we should be in our own home. I should not have forgotten our own bed-chamber. But this place—I have never seen any place like it, it is so dismal!”

“ We are in Agra, mother; but not yet at home.”

“ What noise was that I heard just now?”

“ The trumpets and artillery announcing, I believe, the arrival of the emperor.”

“ The emperor! Ah! I remember. Your father is with him. Yes—yes—he will soon be here. Will he not, my beloved?”

While Nourmahal was assisting her mother to rise, and to arrange her attire, the sounds of several footsteps were heard hurrying along the passages, outside their apartments. The door was immediately opened, and several female slaves entered to tender their services to the mother and daughter, and at the same time to prepare them for a visit from the governor. In a few minutes the latter made his appearance, accompanied by one whom the quick rush of Mangeli towards him, almost before he entered, declared to be Kazim.

“ My cherished one, my child ! ” he exclaimed, in his well-known affectionate voice, embracing them both at once ; for Nourmahal’s expectant eyes had scarcely allowed her mother to anticipate her in pressing her arms around him. “ Nothing is lost—all remains safe while you are with me. Honours, office, wealth,—let them take all. We are again together. I ask nothing more ! ”

The governor considerably ordering the slaves to retire, withdrew, also, himself, leaving the family alone. The first moments of meeting were to each hours of joy. The uncertainty that they should ever see each other again, was over. The anxiously-looked-for morning had come, and with it doubt disappeared. The past was forgotten—the future not yet thought of. They met—in a prison too—but even that circumstance was overlooked in the gladness of those hearts that felt as if they should never again be separated.

When the first impulses of delight had in some measure subsided, Kazim related to his dear companions all that had occurred to him since he had left them at the hermitage.

“ On arriving at the camp, I found that pre-

parations were making for the execution of Chusero. I made my way to the emperor, fearful that I should not arrive in time to prevent the decree for his death from being signed; and I own that I entered the council, where he was engaged, with very little of the senator about me. My blood was in a fever of indignation, first, that my visit to the fortress, as a mediator, should have been made the cover for all the calamity that ensued; and next, that the prince, who had in truth surrendered and placed his life in my hands, should have been dealt with so perfidiously. I did not, you know I could not, conceal my thoughts, or measure my language, in denouncing such an unheard-of violation of all the principles of honour and justice. I produced the capitulation. The emperor was as furious as I could be against that base Persian. Angry words passed. Bochari and his friends drew their swords."

"In the council?"

"In the emperor's presence?"

"In the council. I knew not whether they were about to sacrifice the emperor, or me, or both. But, for myself, I had only one duty to perform. I demanded the prince's safety. I

insisted upon it: and drew up a decree on the spot, which the emperor signed, which I counter-signed, securing full pardon to the prince, upon the terms already agreed to. Bochari talked of treason, for I had spoken of my son—my brave and noble Afkun; brave and noble he could never cease to be, even though guilty of revolt,—this was my treason. I laughed at the ignorance, the presumption, of the base-born slave. I looked upon his words as empty sounds, and quitted the pavilion to seek Chusero.

“ Some time elapsed before I could discover the tent which he occupied. As I approached it, I found it surrounded by a body of cavalry; before I could pass through them, the prince was led out, compelled to ascend a close howda, placed on a swift-footed elephant; and to depart from the camp, attended by a strong escort. They said that they had the emperor’s orders to take him to the fortress of Gwalior, which I knew to be untrue.

“ I remonstrated against this proceeding, and declared my intention to bring the authors of it to punishment. But my words had no effect, the prince was out of sight in a few

moments. On my return towards the emperor's pavilion, to inform him of this abuse of all authority, I was myself apprehended under a decree, accusing me of high treason. I demanded to see the decree. It was produced, signed by the emperor! I could not believe my senses: I looked again and again, at the signature. It was undoubtedly his hand-writing. But the law required that it should be also signed by a civil member of the council. It was so signed—by Auzeem!”

“By Auzeem?” exclaimed Mangeli. “He, who has affected to be one of your most intimate friends!”

“It is inexplicable. No man's faith is to be depended upon in these times of civil strife. In our confidential conversations Auzeem has much oftener taken exceptions to Bochari's conduct than I have done. Nevertheless he seldom, indeed, never opposes him in the council. On the contrary, he seems to shrink from every occasion which might, by possibility, bring him into collision with that person. And yet, to do Auzeem justice, I must say that I have met with very few men of more discernment, of more experience in the manage-

ment of public affairs, or of more unquestionable integrity than he is. By what arts of seduction, or intimidation, he could have been prevailed upon to countersign that decree, I am wholly at a loss to conjecture."

"It is too obvious, that Bochari is now the real emperor of Hindostan," observed Nourmahal.

"He also accuses thee, my child, of the same crime that is laid to my charge—of high treason; but upon what ground he rests that accusation I could not learn."

"Good God! what is to become of us?"

"My beloved Mangeli, it becomes us to be resigned to the ordinances of that Supreme Being, whom you have well styled, the good God. He has, indeed, been hitherto most bountiful to us. Let us place our dependence upon Him, and rest assured He will not fail us, in this our hour of adversity!"

CHAPTER XII.

“ But they shall not obtain that for which they have perpetrated their wicked deed.

“ And in place of benefit I will send them wretchedness.

“ Lo! they shall meet with retribution.”

PERSIAN PROPHETS.

A GENERAL sense of alarm appeared to pervade the population of Agra, upon its being made known that the emperor had returned to his palace, without any of those exhibitions of triumph by which they conceived he ought to have been accompanied on such an occasion. One of the most formidable rebellions which had for many years disturbed the peace of

Hindustan, had been completely put down. The arms of Jehangire had not only vindicated his right to the throne, but had been wielded with a degree of valour, worthy of the best days of Acbar. Even to the omrahs, and the troops who had distinguished themselves in the war, a public entry into the capital, upon their return from the northern provinces, was eminently due. But nothing of the kind was now to be expected. The emperor had come back almost by stealth. It was ascertained that he had arrived in a small boat by the Jumna, and landing at a private staircase, that led into the seraglio, was conducted to his apartments as if he had been a captive, instead of a conqueror.

-It was soon after further ascertained, that the omrahs, whose duty it was, from their high birth, as well as from official station, to keep guard at the palace, had been already displaced, and that their functions were entrusted to common spearmen, members of that corps of Orcha rajaputs, on whom the commander-in-chief seemed now resolved to lavish all his favours. The very name of these troops was odious in Agra. They were the known—un-

punished—detested assassins of the lamented Fazeel. They had taken no part in the late war. They had been sent for by Bochari, while he was upon the march to Cashmere. It was said, that besides their stipend from the treasury, he presented them with double pay from his own purse ; that they were, therefore, instruments entirely subservient to his will, and that the late revolt, though completely extinct, was to be made the pretext for new regulations in the government of the most tyrannical nature.

The public audiences, given from time immemorial by the emperors, were discontinued. No person was allowed access to Jehangire, except Bochari, and those specially furnished with his permission—and then he could only be seen surrounded by a guard of the Orcha chieftains. The reason assigned by the Persian for these extraordinary precautions was, that he possessed in his hands undoubted evidence of a conspiracy, in which most of the omrahs, and many of the inhabitants of Agra, were engaged, the object of which was to assassinate the emperor, and to raise Chusero to the throne. One of the chief conspirators, he

alleged, was the high-chancellor, against whom proceedings were about to be instituted forthwith.

These tidings, with the many false or exaggerated rumours to which they gave birth, diffused a deep gloom over the whole capital. The occupations and amusements of the people were, in a great measure, suspended. Men were afraid to converse with each other upon any matter relating to the empire, lest they should incur the vengeance of Bochari, whose emissaries, profusely paid out of the imperial treasury, were known to be actively employed in all directions. The prisons were filled with persons of note, who had been apprehended upon the denunciations of these spies, without the slightest proof of any offence being brought against them. Each succeeding morning teemed with mysterious reports of new arrests, and of secret decapitations, carried into effect in defiance of every established form of legal procedure.

This calamitous state of things continued for several months, during which it became manifest that Bochari was the real master of the empire, although the public ordinances were still

signed by Jehangire. He did not yet venture to displace the subahs of the provinces, who had been appointed previously to the expedition to Cashmere. It was not concealed, however, that they were all distributed amongst the Orcha chieftains, who were to take possession of their offices as soon as they could be spared from attendance in the capital. As they constituted the principal support of the usurper, he feigned a variety of excuses, from time to time, in order to detain them near his person.

Zeinedeen, who was obliged to act with the greatest circumspection, notwithstanding the sacredness usually attached to his character as a dervish, did not fail to convey to Kazim accurate intelligence of these events, which, he very justly stated, were felt with tenfold severity by the people of Agra, as they were no longer under the protection of the high-chancellor. While he was to be seen, they said, in the seat of judgment, they smoked their chibouques in tranquillity, because they knew that no injustice could reach them, if the administration of the law were in the hands of Kazim Ayas.

The first act of open resistance to the absolute authority exercised by Bochari during a period

of more than twelve months, occurred in consequence of an attempt that was made by his order to raze the mansion of the high chancellor to the ground. A private execution might be attended with serious consequences the moment it became known. An open trial might prove equally perilous. In order to feel the public pulse with respect to his desired victim, he instructed his myrmidons to proceed to that officer's state residence, on the bank of the Jumna, and to demolish it. The design became known, however, and the persons employed to effect it no sooner commenced operations than an immense crowd assembled at the place, and assailed them with bitter reproaches. The men persevered,—troops having in the mean time arrived to their assistance. This was the signal for a general tumult. A part of the building had been already thrown down. The materials were made use of by the people as missiles, which they hurled against their antagonists. The cavalry found it impossible to act, so dense was the crowd by which their movements were impeded. They were slaughtered in detail, and in a few moments the whole of the workmen assembled to execute the orders

of Bochari, were compelled to fly from the ground.

This event filled his mind with alarm. It demonstrated to him the very slight foundation upon which his power was based, although it had been suffered to continue so long, without meeting any considerable opposition. He had failed, it was true, to obtain the concurrence of any of the principal omrahs or rajahs in his system of tyranny. But before this occurrence he felt an impression that his authority, armed as it was with all the terrors which his position enabled him to call to his assistance, was too formidable to permit of any serious attempt at resistance. He trembled on his pinnacle.

The long year already spent by Kazim and his family within the walls of their prison, seemed nevertheless likely to be succeeded by another. From an early period the governor of the citadel had been displaced, because he was suspected of being favourable to their interests. The estates bestowed upon Kazim, by Acbar and Jehangire, as rewards for his important services to the empire, had been confiscated. His property of a moveable nature, consisting of money, household furniture, horses, and cattle

of every description, had been seized and distributed, as well as his estates, amongst the Orcha rajaputs whose rapacity was insatiable. His office was abolished as no longer necessary in a country, that had ceased to be governed by law. He and his wife and daughter were studiously subjected to every species of privation. No other food was allowed them than that which was daily divided among the meanest prisoners,—rice, barley bread, and water. They were indeed suffered to retain three female slaves, the daughters of a nurse who had formerly lived in Kazim's family. But no other persons were permitted to enter their apartments, Zeinedeen alone excepted.

These persecutions, accumulated one upon another, and accompanied with every petty circumstance of mortification which the Persian could invent, at first produced a sensible effect upon the health and spirits of Mangeli. But the mild suggestions of her husband, and the affectionate attentions of Nourmahal, whose character now shone out in all its native dignity and beauty, soon beguiled her from the melancholy anticipations in which she was prone to indulge.

“We are, it is true,” he would say, “deprived of station, fortune, and liberty. But we suffer in common with many others, who possess not our resources for rendering these evils tolerable. Disease takes from some the power of enjoyment in the midst of riches. We still have health. As to high station, it can hardly be desirable to any elevated mind in the present state of Hindostan; and the sense of freedom is in our souls, although we are confined personally within these three chambers.

“At all events let us not shadow out new misfortunes before they actually come. When they do arrive, they are seldom so difficult to bear as we imagine. Something altogether unforeseen occurs to limit their duration, or to disarm them of their terrors. By anticipating them, we give them reality so far as mental pain is concerned, when in fact they may never approach us; and when they do, we suffer them over again, thus unnecessarily doubling the affliction, with which they would have been otherwise attended.”

Nourmahal was not long in reducing to practice the resolutions, which had often passed through her mind, as to providing against the

pressure of calamity, such as that in which she and her beloved parents were now involved. She found means, through Zeinedeen's co-operation, of disposing of the jewels and trinkets which she fortunately happened to have about her person, on the night of her escape from the fortress, when she was so suddenly transferred from the ball-room to the hermitage. The produce of these articles enabled her to purchase, not merely the ordinary necessaries, but even some of the luxuries of life, to which her parents had been accustomed ; and, moreover, a considerable quantity of brocade, silks, muslins, and other materials, which, with the assistance of her attendants, she converted into dresses of the most elegant description. Those maidens were at first little versed in this sort of employment, but she spared no pains in instructing them. Her patience, in shewing them how to execute their work with the requisite degree of neatness, was admirable.

Never perhaps did Kazim contemplate his daughter with a warmer affection, or, more properly speaking, with a higher degree of gratitude to Heaven, for having given him such a child, than when he beheld her engaged in

teaching those young women the very rudiments of needlework, with which they had been before unacquainted, as they had been brought up to the employment of cultivating flowers, destined to be sold in the market of Agra. But they were of docile dispositions, and they soon learned from their young mistress how to perform, with readiness and precision, their assigned tasks, and even to bestow upon them those little graces beyond the reach of mechanism, which flowed so naturally from her own hand.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the flowered muslins which emanated occasionally from this domestic factory. It was Nourmahal's habit to draw the flowers first, and then when her fancy was pleased, not only with their form, but their variety, to work them herself upon the plain muslin. She did not follow the usual fashion of strewing only one species of flower upon the material. She selected such as in colour and feature best harmonised together, and these she disposed within her tambour frame so tastefully, that the eye was at once struck with the novelty, and captivated with the poetic elegance of her invention.

By the industry of her handmaids, these specimens of her art were multiplied. They found a ready sale in the bazaars of Agra, and of Delhi, whither they were conveyed by the care of Zeinedeen, and were speedily so much in vogue amongst the ladies of the two cities, who converted them into turbans, that the supply was seldom adequate to the demand.

In the same manner, the dresses in brocade and rich silks, which were executed by Nourmahal and her gentle companions, were acknowledged, even by persons the most experienced in the manufacture of female apparel, to be inimitable. Even when nothing was done to improve the texture of the material, there was an effect about the fashion of the robe itself, which pronounced it to be fit only for a noble woman. But when to the texture were added ornaments in gold or silver—whether they assumed the resemblance of flowers, or bees, or butterflies, or the insects that illuminate the forest, or the fishes that lighten over the deep,—it was said that none but empresses ought to be allowed to assume such splendid vestments.

CHAPTER XIII.

O branch of an exquisite rose plant, for whose sake dost thou grow? Ah! on whom will that smiling rose-bud confer delight?

HAFIZ.

NOR did Nourmahal confine herself to these occupations, although, in a profitable point of view, they were the most productive in which she could have been engaged. The prices to which her manufactures speedily rose, in consequence of the avidity with which they were sought throughout Hindostan, would have enabled her to realize a handsome fortune. But it was her pride to vary her employments, in order that she should feel no talent under her

command, which she did not exercise on this occasion, in the service of her beloved parents.

She had acquired, almost while she was a child, the art of carving in ivory. This she now put into requisition, and imparted also to her handmaids. They combined to create from the shapeless masses, which Zeinedeen procured for them, miniature temples, towers, baskets, images of the Hindoo gods, chessmen, and small essence cases of the most exquisite description.

One of the most remarkable of their productions, was a model of the market-place in Agra, and of portions of the streets immediately leading into it. There were to be seen, either in the market, or hastening towards it, vendors of fruits, vegetables, flowers, milk, rice, honeycomb, perfumes, medicines, jewels, trinkets, books, and ballads; horses, camels, and elephants; birds and beasts of every kind.

The actors in this varied scene were so cunningly displayed, in the expression of countenance,—in attitude,—in costumes sometimes very ragged,—often scanty in the extreme, that they seemed actually to live, and to be shouting out

the names of the different objects which they had to sell. Those objects were necessarily all upon the most minute scale. But they were imitated in every respect with the most elaborate skill, and with a degree of perfection altogether unrivalled. It was said, that for this production alone Nourmahal received a thousand gold rupees.

Excelling, as she did, all other persons in almost every thing she undertook, this pious daughter attended also with an assiduity which she suffered no other occupation to interrupt, even to the meanest department of her little household. She was usually the first to awake every morning. Arraying herself in a plain cotton robe cinctured at the waist and plaited on her bosom, in trowsers of the same material, and slippers of russet cloth, her beautiful and abundant hair folded into the narrowest possible compass on the crown of her head, and braided over her temples, she called her handmaids to her assistance, and proceeded to cleanse and put in order the apartment opening to the Jumna, which was the sitting room of the family. This chamber, so meanly furnished when they first took possession of it, she had

converted into a little paradise. The window, overlooking the river, though of ample size, and admitting a quantity of light sufficient to give the room a cheerful appearance, was, nevertheless, so closely latticed, that it was calculated always to remind them of their captive condition. She contrived, however, to modify its unpleasant effect in that way, by gilding the bars, and wreathing them with festoons of an artificial clematis, which, without intercepting any considerable portion of the light, gave the window an airy and graceful appearance, through the muslin curtains and drapery she suspended over it. The walls were hung with rich damask of a bright amber colour, and the vaulted ceiling was covered with folds of azure silk, which made the room resemble the interior of a pavilion. For the wretched divan which originally ran round the apartment, were substituted sofas and ottomans, covered with purple velvet, decorated with superb fringes and tassels of gold bullion. A Persian carpet, representing a leopard in pursuit of antelopes and foxes, was spread upon the floor. Round ebony-tables, and stands of red rose-wood, were disposed in the corners, and exhibited a variety

of beautiful porcelain jars and vases, abundantly replenished with perfumes; silver filagree cases, holding small china coffee cups, sherbet glasses, and gold baskets always filled with the most delicious confectionary, and golden ewers for ablutions.

If any of the fringes, or linings, happened to be rent, Nourmahal was ready with a needle and thread, in a silken case suspended from her girdle, to repair them. She took her full share in brushing the carpet, in preventing any dust from accumulating on the drapery, in arranging the table for the morning meal, pounding the coffee in a mortar, and preparing the beverage itself, in which she skilfully preserved the fine aroma, that constitutes the juice of the mocha an almost intoxicating nectar. Her father was fond of a small saffron cake, with coriander seed mixed in it. She was careful to have a fresh supply for him every morning, kneaded by her own hand, and baked under her own eye on the hearth of a recess in the tower, which they were allowed to use as a kitchen. The other meals of the day were arranged under her mother's superintendance. From these luxury was absent, Kazim always preferring viands

dressed with the utmost simplicity, followed by a cup or two of generous wine, which he found conducive to health and cheerfulness.

Under Nourmahal's care the two other apartments assigned to their use, were also speedily altered from their original gloomy appearance. That next to the principal saloon was the bed-chamber of her parents; the other was occupied for the same purpose, by herself and her attendants. The walls and ceilings of these rooms were hung with blue or green silk, and abundantly furnished with carpets, mattresses, and cushions, whose soft and soothing aspect invited to repose.

The morning meal over, Nourmahal changed her cotton dress for a snow-white lawn tunic and trowsers, and seated herself, with her assistants, to the occupation marked out for the day. They were usually richly apparelled, unless when menially employed; for, although their mistress preferred very plain attire for herself, she felt a pleasure in seeing her companions exhibiting some of the profits of their labour, in the variety and elegance of their costume—a taste, on her part, to which they—artless and rather pretty maidens—had no ob-

jection. Mangeli now and then participated in their operations; but she more frequently sat by her husband, knitting stockings, while he read for the whole circle passages from the poetry he admired; or tales from the Persian, which seemed to have peculiar charms for the slaves. It was delightful to him to give them an indulgence in that respect. But he always reserved some hours to himself for graver pursuits—the study of law, the perusal of philosophical works, or the collection of materials from his memory for a history of his own times. The evenings were generally devoted to music.

The spectacle of family affection, industry, innocence, cheerfulness, and religion, presented by these illustrious prisoners and their domestics, when congregated together during the coolness of the early summer morning, was one which even a cherub, winging his way through space charged with a message from heaven to distant worlds, would have stopped to contemplate. What could Bochari have done against persons of this description, whose mental resources defied all his powers of persecution? The fame of Nourmahal's productions was spread all over

the empire. But the admiration in which they were universally held, was secondary to the applause and sympathy which she won from every parent, for the earnest and successful application of her varied talents to the support of those whom her filial piety rendered so sacred in her estimation. Bochari well knew that any attempt to follow up his fabricated charges of high treason against her, would be, in truth, to bring upon his head a revolution. For any such consequence as that, he was as yet insufficiently prepared. Nothing was left undone by which he could hope eventually to accomplish the extirpation of the house of Ayas. So long as Kazim and Nourmahal existed, he felt them as obstacles in his way to the throne, at which he now aimed. But time was still wanted to mature his designs. The experiment tried upon the mansion of the chancellor, afforded him a warning which he had not yet forgotten.

The spirit of deep discontent was, he knew from his emissaries, spreading from day to day amongst the people. The emperor was seldom seen by them beyond the walls of the seraglio. Indeed he was scarcely ever heard of, as, although all the acts of authority were still

carried on in his name, it was known that he was very little consulted with respect even to measures of the first importance. The only person with whom the Perian seemed to share his absolute power was Auzeem, from whom, on every occasion on which he sought them, he received assistance and counsel, to the astonishment and regret of all those omrahs who were acquainted with that minister's character. They could not understand how Auzeem, hitherto looked up to for the experience of the statesman, the honour of the true nobleman, the fidelity with which he served the emperor abroad and at home, and even the particular and zealous regard which he evinced towards Jehangire, could have been prevailed upon to abandon the interest of his master and friend; of the man who, in familiarity, called him uncle; and dedicate all his powers to the consolidation of the tyranny which the usurper had established.

Indeed, Bochari himself sometimes wondered at the readiness with which Auzeem entered into his views. He never found in that adviser any disposition to halt at measures of a moderate character, when a crisis, or even a minor disturbance was apprehended. Auzeem always

resolved in favour of the sternest course. His suggestions were shaped with a direct tendency to put down all chance of any successful revolt against Bochari's authority. His influence over the emperor was every day becoming greater ; but Bochari had no reason to be jealous of it, because it was manifestly used for the purpose of reconciling Jehangire to the idea that his life was in perpetual danger from the poniards of conspirators, and that he could not do better than allow Bochari to take into his hands the uncontrolled government of the empire.

So entirely did the Persian rely upon Auzeem's zeal in his favour, that he latterly seldom thought it necessary to communicate personally with the emperor. The bickerings, and downright quarrels which occurred between him and Jehangire, at almost every interview, produced feelings so opposite to those kindled in the heart of the Persian by the daily increasing adulation of his numerous parasites, that most of his time was passed in their company.

Nothing was now talked of amongst these persons but the abdication of the emperor. They induced Bochari to believe that the apparent tranquillity which had prevailed for some

time, without any remarkable interruption, was an unequivocal testimony of his success in the plans he had put into action for reducing the country under his yoke. The idea was readily taken up by the Orcha chieftains and their dependants, who had become very impatient, on account of the procrastinating answers which the Persian was obliged to give to their importunities for the vice-royalties he had promised them. If the emperor were dethroned, the authority under which the different subahs of the provinces had been acting would, of course, altogether cease, and their successors would experience no difficulty in taking possession of their offices.

Even in this audacious design, Auzeem appeared to concur. The moment it was hinted to him by Bochari, he declared himself in favour of it.

“Indeed,” said he, “to be candid with you, this is a measure which I have already considered in all its bearings. Nor do I apprehend that the emperor will strongly object to it. He has lately almost wholly alienated his mind from affairs of state.”

“And has returned, no doubt, to his theo-

logical follies, mingling with them, as usual, his devotions also to the wine-cup?"

"As to that, you are aware of his habits from a very early age."

"It would be a pity to disturb them. If the reports of the seraglio may be depended upon, the uncle and the nephew still spend many a night together, alternately reading the Koran, and shewing their respect for it, by having their tables laden with flasks of Cabul wine. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Ah, my friend, I believe, after all, that we have found the true philosopher's stone; the real talisman of happiness. To you we consign all the cares of the empire; while no hour passes us by, that is not redolent of pleasure. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Keep to that—keep to that, Auzeem. His majesty shall never want supplies from Cabul. Now as to the abdication."

"There will be no difficulty in the matter, if you do but arrange it prudently."

"What would you advise me to do?"

"You are aware of that foolish passion which Jehangire has long entertained for Nourmahal."

"She is a dangerous woman. Her name is

in every body's mouth. It is chalked upon all the walls in Agra."

"It must be owned that she is an extraordinary woman. Hurling by your arm from a palace to a prison, she has contrived to diffuse her reputation throughout the empire, by the productions of her industry—productions having nothing in them which you can charge as treasonable, and yet calculated to produce political consequences of the most important character."

"That is precisely my feeling, though I had never been able so clearly to understand her designs before."

"Every brocade she sends out is a proclamation against your authority."

"This must be put a stop to."

"I agree with you; but the question is, how?"

"Jehangire is still, you say, attached to her?"

"Ardently. I am convinced that he would give his crown for her hand."

"Depend upon it, she would then put the crown on her own head. No—Auzeem, this must not be thought of. Cannot your experi-

ence suggest some other course for getting rid of that woman?"

"Let Jehangire marry her, upon condition that he abdicates, and that both retire to Persia upon an adequate income, secured to them out of the treasury."

"Well thought of. You have proved my best friend, Auzeem. When the sceptre shall be grasped in this hand, look upon Cashmere as yours."

"That would be a reward far above my merits. It is a sufficient compensation to me to feel, that I have in any way contributed to the establishment of the power, which you now so worthily exercise. I shall go, forthwith, to sound the emperor."

"If I am deceived in that man," thought Bochari to himself, as Auzeem quitted the cabinet in which they had been conversing, "I can never again put trust in any human being. Jehangire wedded to Nourmahal! Would they not then be too strong for me? Her name has a sorcery about it, which seems to have turned the heads of the people of Agra. The very ballads sung through the market-place are full of her praises. Conspiracy is at the bottom of

this. I have no doubt of it. If she would go to Persia, however, and be contented to remain there, that would be some security. And then the diadem of Hindostan would indeed be mine! Oh! glorious destiny for the son of a portrait-painter, as the malignant omrahs are pleased to call me! Their day will come yet. Nourmahal too, and her imperial lover, let them be but once beyond the confines of the empire; I shall take good care that they never return."

CHAPTER XIV.

As calm in danger's hour,
As if from peril far he stood
In some sequestered bower.

ANTAR.

“WHEN shall the long days of this thralldom be over?” asked the emperor, upon seeing Auzeem at their usual hour of meeting in the evening.

“Patience, my sovereign—patience, but for a little time further, and you will find that the policy we have adopted was the only one that could have guided you safely, through the perilous rocks amidst which the vessel of the state has been so long, and so fearfully struggling.

The Orcha rajaputs are growing fiercer every day in their demands upon the usurper. Those demands he dare not yet comply with."

"The monies of the state,—of my people,—are all at the command of that set of banditti. They have emptied the treasury, which, when it was under my care, was always overflowing."

"They are worthy of the master whom they serve. But for the moment, power is in their hands. You know how we have failed in endeavouring to bring together the omrahs, who ought to come to rescue the throne from its present degradation. Their mutual jealousies,—their fears,—their horror of co-operating with the people whom they despise as slaves, in any well organised measure for the overthrow of the Persian,—will earn for them infamy in the annals of Hindostan."

"Do you consider, then, that all our hopes are at an end in that quarter?"

"Entirely so. I have exhausted every means within my reach for gathering their opinions, and dispositions. It was necessary that I should proceed with the utmost precaution; for if a single false step were taken, which

tended to betray my real intentions, the cause was lost."

"Bochari has then no suspicions of your attachment to his interests?"

"I believe none—at least none which he can render tangible. A mind like his, full of the recollections of guilt, cannot be free from doubt as to the length to which he can depend upon any person, with whom he is engaged in the conduct of affairs. But I am necessary to him. It was my object to make myself so. He has nobody in his confidence who can draw up a decree, upon the most ordinary matters referred to the council, and if I were to absent myself from it for a day, I know not what calamities might follow."

"My dear Auzeem, you expose yourself to no common dangers in the difficult part which you have to perform. Upon your head, at this moment, rest the destinies of my people."

"You know Auzeem, sire,—you know that his heart and his head are yours. This is no common tyranny which we have to destroy. These Orcha rajaputs are restrained by no law, divine or human. They are ready instruments for the perpetration of any crime which their remorse-

less employer may think necessary to his safety. That you, and the chancellor, and Nourmahal have hitherto been secured from their poniards, is to be attributed solely to his fear that the time is not yet arrived, when he might venture upon such quarry with impunity. The inferior prey of the forest is still sufficient to feed the vultures by whom he is surrounded."

"Have none of them yet departed for the provinces?"

"None! He dare not part with them. Upon whom could he depend, if they were away?"

"Upon the people of Agra! Has he not been lately distributing largesses privately amongst them, with a view to induce them to proclaim him emperor?"

"There again he is hampered with difficulties. It became known to the rajaputs that sums of money were sent, by his order, to several of the cadis, to be divided amongst the poor of the different districts of the capital,—the poor, being described by his decree, however, to be only those capable of bearing arms, and who would bind themselves in allegiance to him by the great oath."

“Have the cadis then turned against me?”

“He has put creatures of his own into almost every office connected with the police, and the administration of the laws. But the rajaputs, as soon as they heard of this appropriation of the public money, remonstrated against it, in terms which soon deterred him from repeating that experiment. Let him but pursue his own course a little longer, and you will find that he must become their slave. I ascertained this morning, that the Orcha chieftains have had, within these ten days, more than one meeting, at which Bochari was not present.”

“Indeed! that is of importance. What are they about, think you?”

“They have conducted their councils with the utmost secrecy. But from all I could learn, I conclude that they have resolved to fix a day, beyond which they will not wait in Agra for the official warrants of their appointments to the provinces, which they claim for the services they have already performed.”

“Do they expect me to sign these warrants?”

“They expect that you will abdicate the throne.”

“They shall take my head first. May this right hand be palsied, if ever it should hold the reed for any such purpose !”

“Sire, there are occasions when sovereigns, situated as you now unfortunately happen to be, must appear for a season to go with the stream. It was by taking this course, that we have hitherto steered amongst the quicksands by which we have been beset. Your determination is mine. Nevertheless, permit me to hold out to the Persian that the idea is not altogether impracticable.”

“Upon that, as upon all other matters relating to my interests, I confide, my dear Auzeem, in your well-tryed fidelity and discretion.”

“I have hitherto dissuaded you from opening any communication with Nourmahal.”

“In that, also, the matter of all others nearest to my heart, I have yielded to your suggestions. Say, have I not some merit for my self-denial in that respect, seeing that by her conduct in captivity she has won the esteem of the whole empire, and, by her tenderness for her beloved parents, has increased a hundred-fold, if that were possible, her claims to my affection. Oh, Nourmahal! the light of my

heart—if Heaven would promise thee to be yet mine—there are no arrows in the quiver of adversity which could reach my soul !”

“Adversity has, indeed, no power over a mind like hers.”

“Is she not a noble being ? Was I wrong in giving her my heart, from the moment I was able to appreciate her charms ? Her beauty was matchless ; but it was the lustre shed over it by her brilliant mind that fascinated me.”

“Her natural place is undoubtedly beside thee, upon the Indian throne.”

“Had she been in that place when I first occupied it myself, this cruel tyranny would never have dared to lift its head. But it is a consolation to me that I made no attempt to interfere with Afkun’s lawful rights, as secured to him by his marriage. No ! Allah is my witness, that I held, as I still, and ever shall hold, it to be my first duty to adhere rigidly in all things, to the ordinances which I have received from my ancestors.”

“We must not appear to take any step at present, without the knowledge of Bochari. He is fully impressed with the idea, that if an ample income were secured to you, you would have no

difficulty in retiring with Nourmahal to Persia, and giving up all your rights, as well as those of your descendants, to the throne."

"He is, then, under a complete illusion."

"It is, however, an illusion necessary at this moment to your safety. Suppose you see Nourmahal."

"Nothing would be more delightful to me. But is that a matter so easy to be accomplished?"

"We shall see."

"He would not permit her to quit her prison, even for a day."

"Nor is it necessary. He is already prepared for your visiting her secretly."

"Then let us go at once."

"Zeinedeen informed me, that the family occupy three chambers, and that the apartment we first enter is sufficiently gloomy to conceal you there for a few minutes, while I break the matter to her, as well as to the chancellor. At present they must labour under impressions, not advantageous either to your majesty, or me. For instance, the order for their imprisonment is signed by your hand, as well as by mine."

“True, I had forgotten that. The chancellor would, no doubt, more than conjecture that we acted on that occasion, under a coercion which we had no power to resist.”

“These are things I must clear up to him. But here comes Zeinedeen. I charged him this morning, to make the best of his way through the most frequented parts of the city, and to ascertain what is going on there with reference to the intentions of Bochari.”

Zeinedeen, having made his obeisance to the emperor, stated that agents were very actively employed in almost every quarter of the metropolis, in diffusing intelligence that the emperor had abdicated, in consequence of ill health, and that he was about to proceed to Persia, under the advice of his physicians, in order that he might benefit from a change of climate.

“It is well,” said Auzeem. “And the rajaputs—have you heard any thing of their proceedings, since you were with me this morning?”

“I have seen the merchant.”

“The merchant?” asked Jehangire. “Who is this merchant?”

“One of the unhappiest of men, sire,” answered Zeinedeen. “It is but a few weeks

ago since he sought me at my residence, and prostrating himself on the ground before me, entreated that I would pray with him to Allah, for pardon of many enormities which he has perpetrated upon the instigation of Bochari."

"He was formerly much engaged," added Auzeem, "in chemical experiments, with a view to discover the talismanic compound, which would enable him to convert all things into gold. He spent all his fortune in that vain pursuit; but, in the course of his inquiries, he lighted upon many curious secrets of nature, which were before unknown."

"He was, unhappily," resumed Zeinedeen, looking on the ground, "one of the principal agents of Bochari, in procuring the assassination of the greatest ornament of this empire."

"Ah! you mean Abul Fazeel," observed the emperor, in a voice trembling with emotion. "I, too, ought to pray with him for pardon—if, indeed, some words, which in the madness of a moment I once uttered, tended in any way to encourage that Persian in his hatred to the very name of that most distinguished man. I never can sufficiently repent me of those hasty expressions. Often, in the height of prosperity,

have they come back upon the fibres of my heart, forbidding me to entertain any sense of happiness, while his blood remained unavenged. And when care was on my brow, and trouble in my soul, these words were still whispered in my ears, still calling for vengeance. Oh! Fazeel, if you could now witness the situation to which Hindostan and its nominal master are reduced, by the hand of the minion whom I was then fostering—whose counsels I so foolishly preferred to thine—with whom I took part against thee, whenever opportunity offered, thy noble soul would pity Jehangire !”

“ This man,” resumed Zeinedeen, “ being possessed of great ingenuity in almost every kind of art, in mechanism, in the modes of preparing different kinds of poison, and of increasing, or altogether neutralising the power of those matches which are commonly used by gunners, was sent for one evening by Bochari, who, shewing a large bag of gold, promised that that treasure should be his reward, if he would undertake the performance of a task which required the greatest possible expedition. The unfortunate merchant having inquired what it was, Bochari said, that Fazeel had set

out for the Deccan, attended, it was true, only by a small escort. It was probable that they would be attacked on their way by the Orcha rajaputs; but he feared that the latter might be worsted in the encounter, unless the matchlocks of their antagonists were rendered ineffective. The merchant at once saw all that was required of him, and undertook to effect it, receiving at the time half the promised reward. The result I need not state. He it was who destroyed all the matches of the escort, under the pretence of affording them the benefit of a new and infallible invention."

"It is, however," observed Auzeem, "something in his favour, that he appears now really overwhelmed by a sense of his crimes, and anxious to repair them, as far as reparation is possible."

"At first I doubted," continued Zeinedeen, "the purpose for which he came to me. It very naturally occurred to me that he was still in the employment of Bochari."

"And so he undoubtedly is," said Auzeem. "I have indisputable evidence of that fact; for he has been engaged during these last three days in a secret chamber of the tower, occupied

by Bochari, in concocting a large quantity of poison, of the most subtle nature, for some purpose or another."

"You are correctly informed," resumed Zeinedeen, "the merchant has disclosed that circumstance to me, and it was not until he unveiled his mind in every respect, that I had courage to allow him to visit me again. His desire now is, that he may be instrumental in saving the empire from the tyranny by which it is oppressed. He hopes that he may thus, in some measure, expiate his former guilt. I am to see him again at midnight, when he proposes to make further revelations."

The hermit then withdrew.

CHAPTER XV.

Love ye the moon ? Behold her face !
And there the lucid planet trace.
If breath of musky fragrance please,
Her balmy odours scent the breeze.
Possessed of every sportive wile,
'Tis bliss, 'tis heaven, to see her smile.

FERDOSI.

AUZEEM, accompanied by the emperor, proceeded in the dusk of the evening, both muffled up in cloaks, towards that quarter of the seraglio in which the illustrious prisoners were confined. The keys having been already sent to Auzeem, by order of Bochari, who fondly hoped that the result would not fail to promote his own designs, the minister opened the door as gently as possible. He then locked it again

on the inside, and requesting Jehangire to remain in the apartment used as a sleeping-room by Nourmahal and her attendants, he advanced to their sitting-chamber, where he found the family engaged in evening prayer. Amongst the other orisons which they uttered, in an audible and fervent tone, was one for the rescue of the empire from the thralldom in which it was now held by the usurper, and for the preservation of their imperial master, "for still our master he is," added Kazim, "even though this intelligence, we have received of his abdication, be true. No other sovereign lord shall we acknowledge while he lives. May Allah look down upon him, and protect him from his enemies, even though his was the hand which authorised our confinement within these walls!"

Auzeem, checked by these sounds, stopped near the door of their saloon, which happened to be half open. The emperor, on whose ear some of the words also alighted, could not restrain himself from going forward. Placing himself behind Auzeem, he contemplated the group within, with the most lively emotion. A silver lamp, suspended from the roof of the chamber, diffused over it a brilliant light, which

enabled them clearly to distinguish every object.

As soon as the family rose from prayer they sat in a circle, when Nourmahal, by Kazim's desire, read some portions of a book which she held in her hand, and which purported to be a history of the Syrian prophet, of whose mission Jehangire and his companion had heard in Cashmere. It was a narrative of the sufferings of the god, written in a simple style of language, that touched the heart. It lost none of its sweetness or power in the accents of Nourmahal. She then took her mandolin, and preluding, with her accustomed grace upon the instrument, sung the first notes of a vesper hymn, in which her handmaids joined. They purposely restrained their voices within a low compass, in order that they might not be heard beyond the precincts of their prison. But the melody seemed, on that account, still more enchanting. It reminded Auzeem of the warbling of the birds at even-tide, during their late excursion amongst the forests of the Himalas. Jehangire was tremulous with rapture, on hearing again that voice which exercised so much power over his soul. It was with the utmost difficulty he

restrained himself from rushing forward, and at all hazards, folding the admirable musician in his arms.

Auzeem advanced into the saloon, and throwing back his cloak, apologised for intruding on their privacy, adding that he was charged with a communication for Kazim, whom he still designated as chancellor, which would permit of no delay. Although the different members of the group were more or less startled by the suddenness of his appearance, they were in some degree prepared for it, as Auzeem had previously instructed. he hermit to give them an intimation of his intentions.

“How is this?” asked Kazim; “you do me the honour to address me as chancellor, although there is no man in the empire who knows better than you do, that I have no longer either office or fortune in this country. The decrees by which I was stripped of both were under your signature.”

“Of this we will talk at another time,” said Auzeem. “I appear here by no means in the character of an enemy to the happiness of your family. On the contrary, I hope very shortly to convince you, that you have never had a

friend more sincerely anxious than I am, to relieve you from the position in which you have been so long unhappily placed."

"Undoubtedly, explanation is necessary upon this point. Indeed, looking to the present condition of the empire, as it is reported to us from those who have an opportunity of observing it, I can imagine many circumstances by which your conduct might have been influenced. Zeinedeen has taught us to rely upon your good faith, although hitherto appearances have been so violently against you. Your open co-operation, in almost all the acts of the usurper, would, you must allow, be a serious obstacle in the way of your obtaining the confidence of any faithful servant of the emperor—if, indeed, Jehangire still continue to bear that title. We are informed that his majesty has abdicated."

While Kazim was yet speaking, Mangeli and Nourmahal, feeling that the conversation was assuming a tone of importance, withdrew to the lower part of the saloon, leaving the two statesmen together. Nourmahal and her attendants resumed their labours at a piece of tapestry, upon which they had been engaged

for some days, representing one of the battles of Acbar. Her mother took up her tambour, and endeavoured to proceed with a rose she was embroidering on muslin; but her anxiety to know the object of Auzeem's mission, allowed her to make very little progress. Jehangire, concealed in the obscurity of the outer chamber, observed the whole scene with a degree of solicitude scarcely inferior to that of the wife and mother.

"If this report be true," continued Kazim, "it must, I presume, be the result of dire necessity; and if affairs have arrived at such a crisis as this, I fear that those who, whether designedly or not, have been instrumental to it, have brought upon their heads responsibility of a most formidable nature."

"It does seem an essential portion of Bochari's plans," replied Auzeem, "to compel the emperor to abdicate the throne; and I should be glad if any man would inform me, what means we possess to resist his design, in case he should persevere in his measures for carrying it into execution."

Nourmahal now listened to their discourse with more earnestness even than Mangeli.

“Can he not find some mode of withdrawing from the seraglio,” asked Kazim, “and of betaking himself to Delhi or Lahore, where, I am convinced, he would be soon surrounded by faithful subjects, more than sufficiently numerous to destroy the odious faction now leagued against him?”

“I much fear that any attempt of that kind would be perilous in the extreme. Failure would be instantly followed by assassination. Bochari has himself proposed the retirement of Jehangire to Persia.”

“Then it is all over. The fate of the empire is sealed.”

“He further proposes to discontinue your imprisonment, and that of your family, upon condition that”—

“Do not say any condition which shall separate my fate from that of my imperial master. I would much rather abide here, than be free upon terms of that description.”

“Excellent man!” breathed Jehangire; “it is only in adversity that I can truly estimate all thy worth.”

“The condition proposed is,” resumed Auzeem,

“that you and your family should also withdraw from Hindostan.”

“Dear, dear father,” exclaimed Nourmahal, rising and hastening to Kazim, whom she tenderly embraced, “do not hesitate one moment in accepting this offer. We shall go back to the Ilamish,—to the home you once loved,—where we shall be happy as the day is long.”

“And if you suffer Jehangire to join you,” exclaimed the emperor, no longer capable of remaining in his place of concealment, “his happiness, too, will be complete !”

“The emperor! my lord! my master!” said Kazim, first touching the ground, and then his forehead with his right hand. Nourmahal followed his example, but kept her eyes fixed on the ground.

“No longer emperor, my friend, if the usurper may be believed. I am now before you, simply as Selim,—once the ruler of Hindostan, now a prisoner within the walls of his own palace, and soon, I suppose, to be even an exile from the land of his birth !”

“God is great,” said Kazim, in his voice of noble resignation. “Empire is in his hands ;

he gives and resumes it at his pleasure, and we can only bend to his decree."

"Here are, indeed, examples of submission to the will of the most High, which dignify misfortune. What do I behold? A wretched, gloomy prison absolutely turned into a splendid residence! I can recognise the hand that has worked this miracle; it is here," added Jehangire, taking Nourmahal's right hand between both of his. "Whatever be thy future destiny, Nourmahal, would that these rooms could be forever preserved in their present beauty and magnificence, as a record at once of thy skill and industry, and above all, of thy piety towards the best of parents! Heaven surely will reward virtues such as you have displayed during the whole of this long and severe trial, imposed upon you by the basest of men."

"If I deserved any reward, Sire, I have already received it, and much more, in these words of approbation."

"You have heard, Nourmahal, from Auzeem, of the critical state to which the empire has been reduced by the oppressor, into whose hands a combination of most unexpected circumstances appears to have, for the present, transferred my

ceptre. For these two years back I have been no more than the nominal ruler of Hindostan. I am now required to abdicate, and to become an outcast from my own dominions. Should necessity compel me to take that course, say, shall there be a home for me, too, on the Ilamish?"

"Oh yes! it will be our delight to surround thee; as thy slaves to wait upon thee, to administer to thy happiness, to beguile thee from the recollection of thy natural pre-eminence, and to cheer thee, to the last hour of existence, by every means in our power."

"Auzeem, I have hitherto resisted the demands of the usurper for my abdication. Let him be informed forthwith, that I oppose them no longer. I feel that I shall be much happier on the banks of the Ilamish, with these dear companions of my solitude, than I ever could be again upon a throne, which I have hitherto found only a fountain of every bitterness. From the height to which I was elevated, I saw, with very few exceptions,—exceptions almost comprehended in the circle that now hears me,—nothing but selfishness, ingratitude, rapacity, and meanness, in mankind. I have been shocked

by the picture of innate hypocrisy and worthlessness which they have constantly exhibited before me. They are not worth any further sacrifices. Be it arranged that I quit this wretched country."

Auzeem observed, that it might be prudent not to yield too easily to the usurper's exactions, lest he might withhold also the provision of which he spoke, for the emperor's future maintenance.

"That shall be no bar," said Nourmahal. "Yield nothing upon that ground, for here," she added, opening a cabinet filled with gold, the produce of her industry, "here is a supply of wealth sufficient, at least for the present, to meet every exigency. For the future, while health and reason shall remain, those who have earned this treasure, may be able to replenish it—if, indeed, it will be accepted."

"Dearest—noblest of women," said Jehangire in a tone of deep emotion, "how proud I feel in confessing before those who love you, as they love their own hearts, that you have been long the object of my warmest affection. Kazim, my best of friends, you will bear witness, that so long as the laws of the empire in-

terposed obstacles between me and this idol of my soul, I never even so much as hinted to you the state of my feelings upon this subject, agonising as they often have been."

"We are aware, sire, of the generous restraints which you imposed upon yourself in that respect. And had I but known, at an earlier period, your predisposition in favour of Nourmahal, much pain might have been spared on either side."

"If I have an ambition still to recover my throne, which, I may say, is lost, it would only be that I might enjoy the satisfaction of sharing it with this dear one."

"I thank destiny for giving me the opportunity to shew, that it was not your imperial station I looked at, when my heart first knew those emotions which drew me towards you—emotions which I have never forgotten—never could conquer. My beloved mother knows what I have suffered—she will tell you all."

"And I will listen to your disclosures, Mangeli, with feelings which I shall often intreat you to renew: Oh! how delightful it is to know that one is loved for one's self!—that no motive of external splendour or station alloys

the purity of that divine affection which moves two souls to mutual adoration, the first moment they meet! This is a joy which I never felt before. I would not give it away for an empire!"

Some pebbles flung up against the lattice attracted the attention of Auzeem, who happened to be standing near the window. He mentioned the circumstance to Kazim, who said,

"It must be Zeinedeen. Whenever he cannot obtain entrance into our prison, he takes this mode of communicating with us. I shall speak to him. All is safe here, Zeinedeen—have you any message?"

"There is a terrible tumult going on in the city," answered Zeinedeen, who was alone in a small boat on the Jumna. There is a vast crowd of the populace in the neighbourhood of a house, where they say the conspirators are assembled, who are to proclaim Bochari emperor at the break of day. The people are indignant beyond any thing I can describe. They are endeavouring to pull the house down. Listen! There are discharges of fire-arms."

"The people—they are for Jehangire?"

"All for Jehangire—they swear that they will no longer live under the usurper."

"My noble, faithful people," exclaimed Jehangire. "Let us go forth, Auzeem, and place ourselves at their head."

"I have been expecting this outbreak, sire," said Auzeem; "but I fear it is premature. It would not be prudent to expose yourself at this moment. Zeinedeen," he continued, addressing the hermit, "the emperor is here. Can you inform us where are the rajaputs?"

"They have just gone down from the citadel, to rescue their party from the perils with which they are threatened. Let me pray you to take care of the emperor. The night is teeming with rumours of his assassination. It is given out that he refused to abdicate, and that upon attempting to escape from the seraglio, he was murdered by his own guards. I must depart. I perceive a boat coming this way. Be admonished in time."

"Then this is their real plot. I thought I had tracked the Persian through all his deceptions; but I see he has over-reached me at last," said Auzeem.

“ Yours, my lord, has been a most hazardous policy,” remarked Kazim.

“ I own it—but the emperor is still safe—that is the principal object, and I do not yet despair. Bochari is aware that we are here.”

“ If he be, then you may expect to see the rajaputs around us presently,” said Kazim.

“ They will have sufficient employment with the people for a while. But I confess we have not a moment to lose.”

CHAPTER XVI.

They shall not drink wine with a song; the drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

THE ROYAL PROPHET.

WHILE the emperor, Auzeem, and Kazim, were still in consultation as to the course which they ought to pursue, several discharges of fire-arms were heard from the lower parts of the city, followed by loud shoutings.

“ If I rightly recollect, sire,” continued the minister, “ there is an entrance somewhere in this part of the seraglio to the canal, that was formerly used for supplying the large marble bath, constructed by Acbar.”

“ Let me remember. Yes, there is a door

leading to the sluices. The sluices are hard by—are they not ?”

“ They are in a small creek—just near the foot of this tower.”

“ Then the door—”

“ Oh ! yes, yes—I know where it is,” said Nourmahal. “ I noticed it when we were arranging the drapery on the wall. It was almost covered with cobwebs.”

“ The bath, I believe, would contain a hundred of us, if we were so many,” continued Auzeem.

“ Five hundred have banqueted there occasionally,” said the emperor, “ when the heats were violent.”

“ The door is here,” cried out Nourmahal, pressing with her hand against a part of the drapery, with which the walls of her own and her handmaids’ bed-chamber were hung. Shall we cut through the silk ?”

“ If we do,” said Auzeem, “ it may lead to our immediate detection. Loosen it at the bottom, and at the extreme ends of the wall, and let it be lifted up altogether, while I try the door.”

His directions were speedily executed, the

emperor and Kazim busily helping in the operation. The door was easily found, but it was strongly locked.

“Perhaps the key will be found amongst these,” said Auzeem, producing an iron chain, to which several keys, amongst them the key of the door by which he and the emperor entered, were appended.

After trying one or two, he found the third readily admitted into the lock, but it was so rusty that it was with great difficulty he was enabled to force back the bolt. The door yielded to his pressure, and, taking the lamp from Nourmahal’s hand, he looked into the hollow space below, to which he discovered a descent, by means of stone steps inserted in the wall.

While Auzeem and the emperor explored the entrance to the canal sluices, Kazim suggested to Nourmahal the expediency of collecting their money and precious stones, as quickly as possible.

These were speedily put into small rice-bags, and Auzeem having felt assured that they might escape through the canal, (from which water had been long excluded), to the

marble bath, suggested that they should lose no time in flying thither, until the result of the tumult should be known.

The whole party descended safely into the canal, the drapery was then permitted to fall down as it was before, and the door having been locked on the inside, by Auzeem, he preceded them, holding the lamp in his hand.

They had not advanced many paces, when they heard the trampling of feet in the corridors above their head, and then a loud knocking. Auzeem concealed the lamp under his cloak, and prayed his companions, in a low voice, to remain as they were for a few moments. The knocking still continued. It was evidently at the outer door of their late prison. Orders were issued repeatedly to open the door, and threats were uttered to force it, if these orders were not instantly obeyed. A loud crash followed soon after, and a crowd of persons were heard rushing into the apartments.

Kazim could not help feeling strange suspicions passing through his mind, while this scene was going on. Auzeem had by no means as yet won his entire confidence. The acts of

that minister, during the two years of the usurpation which had just elapsed, were all in favour of the success of the Persian. His coolness, at the present arduous moment,—his knowledge of the subterraneous localities of that part of the seraglio,—his possession of the keys, which he could only have procured from the governor by a special order from Bochari,—all tended to excite his alarm, not only for himself and his family, but for the emperor.

“It is obvious,” Kazim thought to himself, “that we are all, at this moment, in the power of any person who has admission to the sluices. If they were opened, a body of water would be in upon us in a moment from the Jumna, from which it would be impossible for us to effect our deliverance. Can it be that we have been brought here by the instrumentality of this man, in order that, after being sacrificed, no trace might remain, by which the deed should be brought home to Bochari?”

Labouring under these apprehensions, to which the circumstances appeared to give probability, but which, however, he ventured not to breathe to any of his companions, he asked Auzeem to let him have the lamp for a moment,

to look for some article which he had purposely dropped.

“Hush, my dear friend,” said Auzeem,—
“hush! Hear you not these voices;—they are the rajaputs,—they are in the prison we have just quitted. Be cautious, or we shall be betrayed.”

“There is nobody here,” exclaimed several voices at once,—“it must be all a trick,—this is no prison,—these are apartments equal to the palace itself.”

“It is a trick,” others repeated. “Bochavi never meant us to find prisoners here. He told us that we should meet not merely with the chancellor, but also with Auzeem and the emperor.”

“They must be somewhere here,” said a rajaput,—“we shall soon find them, if we set fire to the drapery.”

“No; no;” said another,—“if we set fire to the drapery, we may burn down the whole seraglio. Pull down every hanging and curtain, and leave no nook unexplored.”

“It is all idle,” observed a third. “We have been manifestly dispatched here on a wrong scent. These rooms are so splendidly furnished,

that it is absurd to suppose they were ever used as a prison. They belong to some special favourite of the harem."

The rajaputs remained for some time in the apartments, exploring every corner, and venting their anger, in the most violent expressions, against Bochari, who had, as they said, debarred them of their prey. They forthwith proceeded to plunder the rooms of every thing costly they could find in them, and to divide the spoil amongst themselves. This was an operation of no small difficulty, and attended by loud and passionate contentions, during which the clashing of sabres was frequently heard by the fugitives below.

Kazim still persevered, until he obtained the lamp from Auzeem, when, having picked up the article he had dropped, he moved forward a little way, and, carefully examining the walls of the canal, observed that in one part some repairs had been made, evidently of a recent character. Pieces of timber, and chips, freshly cut, were on the floor, and near them a saw, and an axe, quite bright, as if the workman had only just left them there. These appearances tended not a little to increase his suspicions.

"If I recollect right," said Jehangire, "there is somewhere hereabout a small bath, which I have sometimes used myself. The walls, I perceive, have been falling in here. Somebody has been at work propping them up."

"These timbers seem fresh from the saw," remarked Kazim. "There is a recess here, which evidently leads into the small bath you mention, sire. But I cannot conceive for what purpose these repairs have been made at this moment. The baths, I presume, have not been recently used?"

"Not to my knowledge," said Jehangire.

"Give me the lamp; let me cover it," said Auzeem. "See, there is a light advancing towards us. Let us withdraw into the recess."

This fresh occurrence gave new strength to Kazim's suspicions. He was determined to watch very closely. Looking out from the recess, he observed a light advancing rapidly from the further end of the canal, and behind it a figure that seemed almost a shadow. As the figure hastened onward, Kazim retired with the whole party into the small bath, in order to elude observation.

"I think it will now do," said the person to himself, whoever he was, that held the light. "Any obstruction falling in this direction might have been fatal to the whole scheme. These timbers will prevent the wall here from falling in, at least for the present. For the future, it is no concern of mine. Let me now go on to the sluices. I fear they will hardly yield to the spring, unless the wheels be thoroughly oiled; it is so long since they have been worked."

"Here," thought Kazim, "is a revelation of the very design which has crossed my mind. The man, however, seems unaccompanied. It would not be difficult for us to master him."

Pulling the emperor by the cloak, Kazim whispered into his ear, "Have you no fears, Sire. Is not all this very strange?"

"Hush!" said Jehangire; "he is only going to examine the sluices. Something, no doubt, is meditated; but let us be prudent."

The figure passed on to the sluices. Kazim observed him carefully oiling the wheels, and examining every part of the machinery belonging to them. They were composed of two iron gates, one of which, being on a level

with the usual height of the river, was capable of being let down as low as the surface of its bed, to admit the water into the baths either gradually, or in a volume sufficient to fill them in a moment, as might be required. The other gate was fitted to be drawn upward, so as to allow a boat to proceed from the Jumna to the larger bath, that bath having been, in former days, occasionally used by the ladies of the harem as a sort of haven, where they landed from their covered boats, or embarked in them, when they chose to take excursions on the river. The immediate entrance into the bath was guarded by a gate of bronze, richly gilt, and cut through in arabesque designs, to admit the cool air from the river on those occasions, when the bath was converted into a banqueting hall.

Kazim looked anxiously for the return of the figure which he had observed. At length it did retrace its steps, and carrying away the saw and axe, and other tools which had been upon the floor, disappeared.

After remaining in the recess for some time, Auzeem proposed to advance alone, with a view to discover some place of safety for the party,

and also to communicate, if he could, with Zeinedeen, from whom he now became extremely anxious to learn the progress of events in the city. The hermit also, had promised to see the merchant at midnight, and to obtain from him information as to the purpose for which the poison, prepared with so much care, was intended. To Kazim, whose suspicions were far from being as yet lulled, it appeared better that they should all go forward together, at least as far as the bath. Jehangire was of the same opinion. He added, that there was a secret staircase near the bronze gate, which led to the dome, and it struck him that in no place could they be more assured of safety than within the gallery by which the dome was surrounded.

The party, therefore, proceeded forward, until they approached near the bronze gate, through the apertures in which they perceived a light moving about in the marble bath. Again concealing the lamp beneath his cloak, Auzeem stepped stealthily to the gate, followed by Kazim, who recognized the figure he had already seen, standing in the middle of the bath,

and holding up his torch so as to flash its glare around him as far as he could.

Much to their astonishment, they saw that tables were laid out all round the chamber, laden with candelabras and gold vases, sherbet, ices, and confectionery, and every preparation made, necessary for the entertainment of a large number of guests. A separate table was placed near the centre, and before it a divan covered with cloth of gold, evidently intended as a throne for the master of the feast. Upon this table were seen several small phials. While Auzeem and Kazim were observing this scene, with the greatest anxiety, a second figure, wrapped up in a cloak, was observed descending into the bath by the marble stairs that led into it from the palace. Advancing towards the person who held the light, the new visitor grasped him by the throat: snatching the torch out of his hand, he held it up in his face, and asked in a fierce, broken voice:—

“Why are you here at this hour? I have been in search of you at your own apartment. I found that cursed Dervish there. What is the meaning of all this? This saw

and axe, what are they for? Tell me instantly, or your life is not worth this torch."

The voice in which these words were uttered, and the face unveiled by his cloak falling on the floor, at once announced the angry interrogator. It was Bochari.

CHAPTER XVII.

Boast not of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what the day to come may bring forth.

PROVERBS.

“Your highness,” answered the merchant, “may easily see what has brought me hither. Look on that table.”

“Ha! the phials. True; I—I had forgotten. Will these be sufficient?”

“There is enough in one to destroy an army.”

“Is it of that powerful compound essence you described to me?”

“It is,” answered the wretched man, trembling the while so much, that his words were scarcely audible.

“ You have not yet distributed any portion of it in the vases ?”

“ Not yet. I have just come hither for the purpose.”

“ Stay awhile. I am not sure yet whether I shall adhere to my original purpose. These rajaputs, they have served me well in that tumult. They rescued my own life from peril. But for them the house in which my friends were assembled, would have been levelled to the ground. But again, can I depend upon them at the moment I am proclaimed? Have you heard aught else of that chieftain of theirs, Mohabet, whom you said they talked of elevating to the throne instead of me ?”

“ No more than I have already told your highness. What they said amongst themselves, as I overheard them in their discourse, was, that they did not see why they should not have an emperor of their own blood.”

“ Of course, they reviled the Persian—the upstart—the son of the portrait-painter,—did they not ?”

“ They said a great many things, which I dare not repeat to your highness.”

“Caitiff! tell me all; or, by the Heavens, you die!”

“They did use the words you have mentioned.”

“Villains! they shall soon be with Fazeel. Open the phials.”

The unfortunate slave, already wasted to a mere skeleton, could scarcely collect from his trembling muscles, sufficient strength to uncork the phials.

“And yet, if Mohabet could be secured; for, on whom am I to depend, if these rajaputs fail me? My confederates among the omrahs are, after all, but few. The slightest turn of fortune against me would sever the bond between us. True—I have bought over a large party amongst the people, by giving them largesses, and by promising to divide amongst them the mines of Golconda. Could I be but secure of their fidelity! Yes—open the phials. Let me see—it is not a liquid.”

“It is a composition to be spread by this brush at the bottom of the vases into which the wine is to be poured.”

“Bring hither the vases.”

“By this time,” said Bochari, throwing him-

self on the divan, while his demon-like agent was employed in collecting the vases from the tables—" By this time, the fate of the emperor, and of his two choice ministers, is sealed. That was a splendid combination— Auzeem—the wisest of men, as he believed himself to be, whom I so long succeeded in cajoling; Kazim, whom I dreaded even more than the emperor; and, above all, Nourmahal, who, if she lived, would have overthrown me by the mere exhibition of her presence in the palace before the people,—all cut off by one masterly movement! It was a grand act in this swelling drama. All collected in one focus, by my management. Auzeem, my prime agent, and at a moment too, when he, perhaps—for he is a consummate dissembler—conceived that he was forwarding his own plans for the restoration of power to Jehangire! It was excellent. Little did they expect, when this morning's sun rose, that they should be sleeping to-night in the bed of the Jumna! Such was the account you received, also; was it not?"

" Did your highness speak?"

" Why, man, you tremble as if you were

looking on an evil genius. What is the matter?"

"Has your highness seen nothing?"

"What do you mean?"

"Methought I saw shadows moving near you."

"Ha! ha! ha! The shadows of the emperor, I suppose, and of his faithful ministers."

"Alas! if the report be true, they are in a cold and lowly sepulchre."

"If true, sayest thou? Doubt it not."

"There they are again; they stare upon me through the portal. Oh, mercy!—mercy!"

The emperor had been attracted to the bronze gate, where Auzeem and Kazim could not help remaining to witness the issue of this scene of treachery and guilt. The light flashing on their countenances as the merchant passed near them, struck his soul, already steeped in crime, with terror. They instantly drew back; and, prepared by a simultaneous impulse, if the gate were opened, to rush at once upon the usurper, and slay him on the spot. But the merchant's terror took a different turn.

"No!—of the emperor's blood, these hands are guiltless. It is Fazeel—see—see—and his

brave companions—the victims of my cursed act. Oh! kill me a thousand times—but look not at me thus!” exclaimed the wretch, falling on his knees, and clasping together his withered hands.

Bochari rose from his couch, looking almost as pale as his companion.

“This is a madness that has come over you! Come—come.”

“That is he—that is he—the real murderer. Not me—he it was who did it all—I was but a machine in his hands.”

“Another word of this, vile slave! and this knife shall be buried in your heart.”

“Heart? Oh! you will find neither heart nor blood here. Here is my naked breast; relieve me of life—I ask nothing more.”

Bochari paused, while he contemplated, with horror, the convulsed features of his accomplice. The knife fell from his hand on the marble floor. Affrighted by the sound of his own weapon, he started back. The torch, still held between the trembling hands of the merchant, glared upon the countenances of the two murderers. They looked as if they had

already met in those regions upon which Hope is never to dawn!

The emperor and his companions, now fully aware of the dangers which they had just escaped, looked forward with just alarm to those which they had still to encounter. Matters had arrived at such a crisis, with respect to Bochari, that there appeared to be no crime which he was not ready to perpetrate; no hazard which he was not resolved to court, in defence of his usurpation. Lavish as he had been in his presents to the Orcha rajaputs, and faithful as they had hitherto been to his cause, nevertheless, it seemed that as the hour approached, which was to put their allegiance to the most important test, he trembled for their sincerity. He was to be proclaimed emperor of Hindostan, as soon as the sun should appear above the horizon. But how long should he retain the throne, which was to depend for its security upon such venal support? They had already divided amongst themselves the provinces of the empire. Should they proceed to take possession of them, what was to become of his crown?

The people! Could he look to them for as-

sistance? He had sent his emissaries amongst them to canvass for their voices—to purchase them—and he had received promises of extensive aid. But the great danger he had to apprehend was that arising from the ambition of Mohabet, a proud and fierce Orcha chieftain, whom some of his followers seemed resolved to set up in opposition to the Persian. It would be a disgrace, they said, to their ancient blood, and to the rank which they had formerly held in the empire—a rank which they had now a favourable prospect of recovering—to prostrate themselves before a foreigner of mean birth, who possessed no title whatever to the throne except his sword. Without them, that sword would be of little value. Counting upon the facility with which they had hitherto maintained him in possession of supreme authority, they began to feel that they were themselves the real masters of the empire, and that the throne was a prize which it was in their discretion to bestow upon any person whom they thought fit to elevate to the imperial mantle.

Bochari was fully aware of the notions which the rajaputs entertained upon this sub-

ject. He felt all the insecurity of his position, and scarcely knew what measures he could take to improve it. The destruction of the whole band, by means of the deadly composition which his unhappy agent had prepared, suggested itself to his mind as an alternative, in case he should find the populace in his favour. But if the latter failed him, then he had no resource to fly to except the rajaputs. Agitated by the doubtful prospects in which he was involved, he had invited all the Orcha chieftains, and as many of their followers as the large bath could hold, to a banquet, at which they were to swear allegiance to him, after his proclamation the following morning. He had instructed the merchant to diffuse over the interior of the wine-vases the solution contained in the phials; and yet, at the moment when that operation was to have been carried into effect, he entered the bath, in order to prevent it. Again he wavered in his purpose—again resumed it.

The thought occurred more than once to Auzeem, that while the two demons—for such they might be truly called—were holding their atrocious council, it would have been a most

just retribution, if, after placing his companions in safety, he should hasten to the sluices, and suffer the Jumna to avenge the cause of the empire. But the idea, that the destruction of Bochari at that moment, would only lead, very probably, to the proclamation of Mohabet, instead of the Persian, taught him the prudence of delay.

Meantime the morning was rapidly advancing. Bochari, still doubtful as to the course he should take, beheld his prime instrument before him, in the last agonies of death. The wretched man had never known what it was to possess a peaceful mind, since the period when, seduced by a large reward, he had made the weapons of Fazeel's escort powerless in their hands. Before that time, he had given his time and his thoughts chiefly to chemical experiments, in which he displayed uncommon perseverance, and a wonderful acquaintance with the secrets of nature. But, in following up his labours, he reduced himself to the lowest degree of poverty. To redeem his fortunes, he accepted the infamous mission confided to him by Bochari; but the price for which he bartered his soul, was soon exhausted, and then he had

nothing to depend upon, save the precarious bounty of his patron. In return, he was compelled to refuse no task, however criminal it might be, which that hard master imposed. Tranquil sleep he never knew again. Horror filled his mind, and attenuated his frame to such a degree, that he looked the very picture of the evil one. His residence was a secret chamber in the tower occupied by the Persian; and there, through the lonely night, he pursued experiments dictated by his tyrant, with a view to discover the compounds most capable of extinguishing life in the shortest possible space of time. He was right in stating, that of the phials which he had placed on the table in the banquet-room, the quantity contained in one alone would have been enough to cause the destruction of an army. The slightest portion of it, lodged in the bottom of a large vase, would be sufficient to poison all the wine it could contain.

But there was now little time for deliberation—the day dimly dawned through the dome-lights of the bath. The wretched merchant, overcome by the terrors with which his soul had been appalled, and reduced to the last extre-

mity of impotence by misery and disease, gave up his wearied spirit on the floor. There was no other creature in existence, to whom Bochari dared to intrust the secret of his infernal design. He had not the time to accomplish it himself, for the sounds of shoutings were already echoing through the air. To execute the work partially, would only expose him to discovery, and to certain revenge. There were upwards of five hundred vases on the tables. When he beheld their number, and looked on the breathless thing, upon whose agency he had depended, a pang of despair shot through his frame, which, like a flash of the anger-lightning of Heaven, opened before him the dreadful volume that contained the record of his crimes.

“Oh! those shouts,” he exclaimed, “are they for, or against me? Methinks, I hear them utter the cursed name of Mohabet. Hush! What is to be done? This body—how am I to dispose of it? Bochari! do they say? These phials—if found here, will betray all. Let me hide them in my girdle. My ataghan!—what has become of it? Aye, here it is. It may yet serve me to good purpose,

when all other weapons fail. I must wrap this horrid burthen in my cloak,—true, it is not very heavy—and bear it on my back to his chamber! Courage—they come. Bochari? Yes—it is—in every voice—Bochari—Bochari! The diadem of India is mine. The people are with me. The artillery confirms the tale. Oh! glorious sounds. Roll on—I come. They call for Bochari—the emperor! Now let the Orchas call me the foreigner—upstart—if they dare!”

Saying these words, he took up his knife, and stowing the phials in his girdle, and covering the lifeless body with his cloak, he placed it on his back. He then retraced his way by the marble steps, and disappeared

CHAPTER XVIII.

Honour to him, who knows no fear,
But seeks the thickest fight;
While thousands fall before the spear
Held by that arm of might.

ANTAR.

It was with the utmost difficulty that Mangeli, even with all the assistance she could receive from her affectionate child and consort, maintained her presence of mind, during the progress of the painful scene just terminated. All personal anxiety was, however, now no further thought of. The safety of the emperor was the principal object of their solicitude, and the events, about to occur, became every mo-

ment of such absorbing interest, that measures of a decided nature could no longer be postponed.

Jehangire declared his readiness to return at once to his apartments in the palace, or even to proceed into the market-place of Agra, to shew himself to his people, and thus to afford the best contradiction to the rumours that had been circulated of his assassination. Auzeem feared, that in the present state of things, any step of this kind would be attended with a degree of hazard which ought not to be incurred. The reign of the usurper, he said, was clearly drawing to a close. He felt no doubt that the jealousy of Mohabet would speedily deprive the Persian of the support of the main body of the rajaputs, and that if the rival candidates for the throne, which they supposed to be vacant, were left to settle their disputes amongst themselves, they would both soon perish.

Under these circumstances, Kazim strongly dwelt upon the expediency of the emperor's proceeding, with as much secrecy as possible, to Delhi, where he would be certainly received with open arms, and be defended with the utmost fidelity and enthusiasm.

Auzeem inclined to this opinion, which Jehangire cordially adopted. He would never hesitate, he said, if he had the opportunity, of throwing himself upon the love of his subjects, in any part of his empire. Whatever his personal faults and errors may have been—and that they were numerous he would not deny—he was conscious of no act to which he had been a willing party in his sovereign capacity, that was not intended to promote the happiness of those whom Providence had placed under his authority. Now that he was no longer under the restraint, which had for more than two years kept him a prisoner in his own palace, he was prepared to dare any danger, in order to rid the empire of the oppression by which it was disgraced.

It was then resolved that, at all events, Jehangire, attended by the chancellor and his family, should proceed, by the Jumna, towards Delhi, in a covered boat, if one could be immediately procured,—that Auzeem should remain in Agra, to watch the course of events; and that if those events should assume, as he confidently expected, a favourable turn, he should despatch faithful messengers to inform the

emperor, and to recall him to the capital forthwith.

It was still the grey of morning. Auzeem hastened towards the apartments which had been so opportunely abandoned the night before, and looked anxiously through the window, hoping that Zeinedeen's boat might present itself. He had no doubt that the solicitude of the hermit, for the safety of the late prisoners, would have induced him to collect all the intelligence he could as to the events going on in the city, and to hover about in the river, until he could communicate them without danger of detection.

Fortunately Auzeem was not disappointed. The hermit's boat was already under the window. Auzeem desired him instantly to row on close to the wall, until he should come to an iron gate, and to wait there. While Zeinedeen was occupied in executing this direction, the minister conducted his companions to the gate, and, raising the upper division of it, by means of the machinery of the sluices, shewed them the hermit's boat just outside. Their embarkation was but the work of a moment: the awning of the little vessel was immediately adjusted;

consisting of a canvass, which, being spread over hoops, completely screened the passengers from view; and a sail was set, which, catching a favourable breeze, bore the precious bark gaily against the lethargic current of the Jumna.

Jehangire felt transported with delight at the sudden change which had taken place in his circumstances. He was now beside her who had been so long the object of all his waking and sleeping visions of felicity. Nothing was wanted to complete his happiness in that respect, except the legal sanctions of marriage, which he was resolved to have performed by the *cadi* of the first village at which they could land, without incurring any danger of premature discovery. He was in the bosom of a family he esteemed, not only on account of his Nourmahal, as he now loved to call her, but because they had been uniformly zealous in their attachment to him. The chancellor he admired for the noble and disinterested character which he had displayed on every occasion that called it into action; and the hermit, whose learning, and virtues, and splendid intellect had won his regard the first hour he had known

him, gained so rapidly upon his heart, that he was resolved, if possible, to detain him always near his own person.

The bark was speedily out of sight of the capital, and beyond the reach even of its sounds. Zeinedeen turned out to be an excellent pilot. While they proceeded on their way, he stated that at midnight, according to appointment, he had gone to the apartments of the merchant, where he waited for two hours. Just as he was coming away, he met Bochari at the door, who asked him what had brought him there. To this question he found it difficult to give a direct answer, without violating the confidence reposed in him by the merchant. He therefore said that he was there at the request of the latter, who had promised to explain some experiments of a chemical nature, in which he was engaged ; but as the merchant was not there, he would return another time. Zeinedeen confessed that he much doubted whether the Persian would, upon this representation, permit him to depart. However, finding his movement not opposed, he proceeded down the stairs of the tower, and returning to his boat, anxiously rowed up and down opposite their

prison window, until he was called by Auzeem.

The emperor related to Zeinedeen all that they had witnessed in the bath. The hermit was horror-struck. He lamented the fate of the unhappy man, who had evinced a degree of contrition for his crimes, which promised much in favour of his future efforts to expiate them as far as he could, by a total change of life, and supplications to the Merciful One. Whatever were his notions upon this point, it appeared highly probable that his object, in making the midnight appointment with Zeinedeen, was to inform the latter of some project he had contemplated with reference to the sluices. It was evident that he had prepared them for some purpose or another, which he dared not reveal to Bochari, and of which the latter entertained not the most remote suspicion.

The voyagers met scarcely any boats, except those of poor fishermen. One of these they employed to procure them a store of provisions at a farm-house, near which they passed. The provender thus obtained was not very sumptuous, consisting chiefly of hard boiled eggs, some cold fowls, a few cakes of unleavened bread, a

basket of grapes, and a jar of spring-water. The fresh air of the Jumna, however, gave the party a relish for any thing they could obtain. Jehangire separated the limbs of one of the bipeds with considerable tact, and distributed it with his own hand. Kazim undertook the division of the bread ; and Nourmahal, spreading some vine-leaves on her lap, arranged there the bunches of grapes, which she dispensed with a smiling hospitality, that dispelled the gloom of the night from every body's countenance.

Her exertions, in this respect, were readily assisted by Zeinedeen, who, as the bark rode steadily along over the rippling waters, related various anecdotes of his life, interweaving with them admirably drawn portraits of distinguished persons, whom he had known during his intercourse with the world. From these he deviated into those tales with which our Asiatic world abounds, much to the delight of Jehangire, who owned that the cares of state had not yet been able to erase from his mind the recollection of the raptures with which, when a boy, he pored over the wondrous narratives of "The Enchanted Horse," "The Forty Thieves," "Aladdin," and "The Merchant of Bagdad."

“The human mind,” observed the hermit, “is truly a most astonishing creation. The more we examine it, the less we can comprehend it. We listen, as the child, the youth, the matured man, nay, as the patriarch, with intense earnestness to the story-teller, while he is weaving his web of fiction. We know that his production has no truth in it, and yet, I doubt if truth, in its most attractive forms, can exercise over us the charming influence which those productions possess.”

“I confess,” said Kazim, “that I must plead guilty to the same frailty, if such it may be called. - Many histories—many books and systems of philosophy, which I have studied with all the diligence I could command, have totally vanished from my memory. But I can even now repeat, word for word, the adventures of the three princes, Houssain, Ali, and Ahmed, during their struggle for the hand of Nourounihar.”

“I remember it well,” said Jehangire; “and that piece of tapestry he purchased at Bisnagar, by sitting on which, he was enabled to transport himself wherever he wished.”

Thus conversing, they arrived at length within

view of a considerable village, where the emperor knew there must be a *cadi*. He immediately requested Zeinedeen to land, to proceed to the *cadi's* house, and to make arrangements for the solemnization of the ceremony, which was now the first object of all his thoughts. Zeinedeen joyfully performed the mission with which he was charged. The whole party debarked in the dusk of the evening, and under the names of Selim and Mher-UI-Nissa, were united the two, whose hearts had long been intertwined by the most ardent affection. The *cadi*, a venerable old man, who had never stirred beyond the precincts of his village, little dreamed, when he was setting down those names in his register, that he recorded the marriage of the emperor and Nourmahal. The simple forms of the law having been thus complied with, the party returned to their boat, and resumed their voyage towards Delhi.

Meanwhile, Anzeem, upon whose fidelity, prudence, and courage, the fate of the empire now devolved, having carefully restored the upper division of the sluices to its usual position, returned through the subterraneous passage, near enough to the bronze portal, to be

enabled to observe every thing that might take place within the bath ; or rather, as it should now be called, the banquet-chamber. Soon after Bochari had taken his departure, crowds of male and female slaves entered the chamber and proceeded to heap the tables with cold viands, filling the vases with rich Cabul wine, and making all the necessary preparations for the inauguration feast, which was to be commenced at sun-set.

Bochari had succeeded in reaching his own apartments, without meeting any obstacle. Thence he conveyed his horrid burthen to the secret chamber previously occupied by the merchant. Having carefully secured the door, he again listened, as the sun rose, to the sounds that were rapidly approaching the citadel, until he convinced himself that he heard his own name vociferated again and again. He felt, therefore, no further hesitation in proceeding to the palace. There he met about two hundred of the rajaputs, who, upon his appearance, hailed him as emperor of Hindostan.

He accepted their congratulations in a confused and awkward manner ; and when the imperial mantle, which two of the chieftains held

in their hands, was placed upon his shoulders, he trembled violently, as if he had been seized by some fatal pestilence. He, however, soon shook off the uneasy sensation, and entering the hall, in which the emperor usually gave audience to the people, he ascended the throne. The great state drum was then struck as a signal to the artillery on the ramparts; and the gates of the citadel were thrown open, when some hundreds of the lowest dregs of the populace appeared in the great square, shouting "Long live Bochari, emperor of India!" Many of them appeared intoxicated with wine. Some were evidently malefactors, who had been permitted to escape from the prisons, upon condition of aiding in the cry of the minions, who had been hired to proclaim the new sovereign. The homage of such a motley crew had nothing in it of a character to redeem their want of numbers. The exhibition of their scantiness in that respect, as well as of the miserable apparel in which they were brought to perform their assigned task, struck upon the Persian's heart as a fatal omen.

He had been taught by his agents to expect that many of the opulent merchants of Agra

had espoused his cause, under the hope that he would elevate them to the rank of omrahs. He was further led to believe that the artizans, and a large number of the people, above the class of mendicants, would join in hailing his accession to the throne. But when he looked at the villanous bands before him, waving their ragged turbans and girdles, or tossing up in the air their greasy caps, he could not conceal from himself that his power was much more secure when he wielded it in the name of Jehangire, than it could be with the sceptre in his own hands.

Bochari speedily discovered, also, that the attendance of the rajaputs was by no means numerous. There were nearly a thousand of that body altogether in his pay, and yet not above two or three hundred, at the utmost, were present to greet his accession to the crown. Mohabet was absent, together with all the rajaputs who were suspected of adhesion to that chieftain's cause.

These circumstances wore a sinister aspect. Nevertheless, all the fire of his ambition glowed within him, when he beheld the diadem, glistening in its glorious pride of jewellery,

placed before him upon a cushion, and beside it the massive golden sceptre, set with emeralds and rubies. Rising, he gave the signal for the great state-drum to be again struck, and the silver trumpets to be sounded. He then planted the crown upon his head—beneath the weight of which, however, he felt as if he were sinking into the earth. The sceptre, also, he grasped, but with a tremulous hand. The rajaputs, and the groups in the square, again hailed him with the title of emperor; and the ceremony being concluded, the miserable pageantry of the usurper's first court speedily passed away.

The intelligence of his accession, together with the rumours spread, in every quarter, of the emperor's abdication and death, diffused a deep gloom over the capital. Mohabet and his friends kept in close council the whole of the day. They learned from their emissaries, from time to time, a variety of circumstances, which enabled them to conclude, that nothing would be less difficult of execution at that moment than the complete overthrow of Bochari. They saw, that without their aid, he was utterly powerless, and they therefore resolved, that un-

less he agreed to assign to their party the principal offices of state, and the best subahships in the empire, they should no longer acknowledge him as the sovereign.

The question, whether, after dethroning him, Mohabet should be set up in his place, was attended, however, with greater difficulties than they had at first foreseen. It was soldiers of their party who had been despatched to Kazim's prison, charged with the sanguinary commission they had declared. But their promised victims had either escaped, or must have been immolated by other hands. They could gain no clear or decisive information upon this point. They sometimes suspected that Bochari had concealed the emperor in some secret chamber of the palace, for the purpose of using his popularity against Mohabet, in case the latter should gain the ascendancy; but, at all events, they determined on attending the inauguration banquet, to which they had been invited, well armed. Before swearing the great oath of allegiance, they would interrogate the Persian; and if they were satisfied as to the death or abdication of the emperor, they would then compel him to concede

the terms they had already talked of, or transfer the throne to Mohabet.

The latter, accompanied by about three hundred of his partizans, proceeded in a body to the palace an hour before sunset, and, entering the banquet-chamber, took their places at the tables. Bochari was duly informed of their arrival, which he heard of with a lively sense of pleasure. He looked upon it as a token of their adhesion to his cause, which, from their absence during the morning, and the whole of the day, he feared they had determined not to support any longer. Accompanied by the two hundred rajaputs, who had remained faithful to him, decked out in the most brilliant attire with which the imperial wardrobes could furnish, he proceeded at the appointed hour to the place of meeting. The silver trumpets, stationed on the fifty steps that led down to the chamber, announced the approach of the new sovereign, who, as he moved forward, surrounded by his guards, wearing the crown of Hindostan upon his head, and bearing its sceptre in his hand, assumed for the moment an appearance of real dignity, which, one would hardly have supposed, the Persian could exhibit.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ In the morning, when the raven of night had flown away, the bird of dawn began to sing ; the nightingales warbled their enchanting notes, and rent the thin veils of the rose-bud and the rose ; the jasmine stood bathed in dew, and the violet also sprinkled his fragrant locks. At this time Zelika was sunk in pleasing slumber ; her heart was turned towards the altar of her sacred vision. It was not sleep ; it was rather a confused idea ; it was a kind of frenzy caused by her nightly melancholy. Her damsels touched her feet with their faces ; her maidens approached and kissed her hand. Then she removed the veil from her cheek, like a tulip besprinkled with dew ; she opened her eyes, yet dim with sleep. From the border of her mantle the sun and moon arose ; she raised her head from the couch, and looked around on every side.”

JAMI.

HAVING taken his seat upon the divan, in the centre of the room, a herald, superbly attired, then appeared beside him, and read out the record of his accession to the throne, while the whole assembly were standing. The herald

having concluded with the words—"And, therefore, Long live Bochari—Conqueror of the World—and the Padishah of Hindostan," the cry was loudly repeated on all sides, with so much apparent enthusiasm and unanimity, that his spirit catching new fire from the homage he had received, prompted him to rise, and to express, in an improvised address, his sense of the proud honour they had conferred upon him. He then desired the banquet to proceed, the herald, in the mean time, making preparations for administering the great oath.

The rajaputs, seated all round the chamber, on divans placed close by the wall, the tables piled with gold and silver dishes, containing the most sumptuous fare—the usurper enthroned in the centre, before a golden table, also copiously supplied—the crowds of pages and footmen, in splendid liveries, waiting on the guests—the trumpeters on the fifty steps—the groups of black slaves employed in bringing to the banquet the numerous dishes prepared for the occasion—the candelabras, which shed their abundant and brilliant lustre over the whole scene—myriads of censers, fuming with fragrance, amid the sounds of martial music, interrupted now and then by the firing

of artillery, exhibited, upon the whole, a spectacle of human grandeur, worthy of a better cause.

The wine-vases were rapidly emptied, and as rapidly replenished, in every quarter,—the imperial cellars having been thrown open on the occasion. The festival appeared to be passing off with every symptom of harmony and joy. Conversation was loud, eloquent, undisguised, at every table. No whisperings were observed; no dark looks shed upon the scene any shade of that sinister aspect, which had given to the morning so desponding a character. Bochari looked upon his possession of the throne as secured beyond all danger, and was already preparing in his mind measures for suppressing any revolt that might break out in the city, when his eye, which from the dreadful recollections of the previous night, had been more than once fixed upon the bronze portal, suddenly caught a shadowy figure moving inside it.

The horrors that had overwhelmed the mind of the merchant seemed to have been at once, as if by contagion, transferred to his own. His gaze was fixed. His countenance, hitherto flushed with wine and the excitement of the

occasion, became deadly pale. In that shadowy form he beheld Fazeel, as he thought, beckoning all his slaughtered companions to assemble and witness the enthronement of their murderer.

“Wine, wine!” exclaimed the usurper, in a voice scarcely audible, while he still looked with glaring eyes upon the portal. The herald suggested to him that the time had arrived for taking the great oath.

“Wine!” repeated the Persian, his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth;—“wine, I say. I am sick, sick at heart.” The words were followed by a deep moan, which startled the whole assembly. Some of the rajaputs already noticed the extraordinary attitude in which the usurper had placed himself, half risen from his seat, his hand waving as if in compliance with the call of some person through the portal, his lips quivering, his limbs trembling beneath him.

“But why me alone? I was not there. I touched thee not,” he exclaimed.

“What means all this?” asked Mohabet, as, quitting his seat and crossing the table, he hastened to Bochari. “What is all this? Has the crown already turned your head?”

“The crown! Ha! ha! ha! Take it,—see

if it will deliver you from that dreadful spectacle. Here—the leader of these rajaputs—here is your real immolator.”

“The Persian is mad,” said Mohabet; “hear ye what he says?”

“Aye, hear ye what I say? Answer to those bleeding warriors,—answer to Fazeel; were ye not his murderers?”

The rajaputs, by an instantaneous impulse, all drew their scymitars. The herald and all the attendants fled up the steps of the chamber, looking backward affrighted, not knowing what was about to occur.

“Are you the man to upbraid us,” cried out several voices; “you who, if you were not the disguised astrologer that told us of the prey, at all events employed that merchant who ensured it.”

“It is false.”

“He raves. Give him water. This is not like a sovereign. For shame! Shake off this weakness. We wait to take the great oath,” said one of the chieftains, who was attached to Bochari’s cause.

“He begins his reign by insulting us all,” said Mohabet.

"He knows not what he says," resumed the usurper's partizan. Back to your seats. It is but a cloud passing over his mind."

"I go—hush!—look at their hands, red with your blood. Nons of it is here," added Bochari, holding out both his hands; "they are white as the lotus."

"We will not suffer this language. What! call us murderers? as if upon us only rested the blood which he procured to be shed for his own purposes."

"Down with the Persian!"

"Down with the traitors!" cried out the two parties, as, separating, they rushed upon each other.

But before victory could declare on either side,—a victory that, giving preponderance at that moment to one faction or the other, might have been followed by many years of calamity to Hindostan, a hand unseen was unerringly preparing the penalty due to both. Auzeem was without the portal, anxiously expecting the very scene of contention which had now arisen, though he presumed it would have proceeded from a different cause. Fearful of involving the innocent with the guilty, he waited

until the herald and the attendants had hastened up the steps in dismay. Then flying to the sluices, he struck the spring that held the lower gate in its place, and at the moment that the scymitars of the double oppressors of his country were lifted against each other, the sudden inundation from the Jumna, like an angry god, quelled the battle.

No groan was heard. The weight of the waters above the heads of the banditti was so tremendous, that nothing rose to the surface. The attendants, who had reached the upper steps, looked in silent horror upon the dark gulf below.

“Now,” thought Auzeem, as he returned to the palace to find out some faithful messengers whom he might despatch to the emperor; “now Kazim will do me justice. I ought not to wonder at his suspicions. Mine was, indeed, as he well designated it, an adventurous policy. To be seen co-operating openly, and even zealously, with the late usurper during a period of more than two years; countersigning his decrees; attending his councils; suggesting and advising measures of state policy, and assisting him even through the mazes of intrigue in which he

was frequently involved ; and in all things acting (he believed) as if I had utterly abandoned the emperor, whom I represented to be incapacitated for his functions, I did, no doubt, incur an awful responsibility.

“ But I saw my course clearly from the moment the emperor was made prisoner in his own tent in Cashmere. I saw we were completely in the hands of the most ambitious, and the most remorseless of men. His next step I knew would be the assumption of the crown. Nothing could be gained—on the contrary—every thing would be hazarded by any premature resistance.

“ The moment, long desired, however, has come at last. Success—more complete than I ever dared to hope, has crowned my proceedings. So perish all traitors to the honoured crown of the master, whom it will be the glory of my life to have thus rescued from the base tyranny of that Persian !”

Before the morning dawned, all the imperial galleys were assembled by the orders of Auzeem, and fully manned by crews attached to them, the men dressed in their state apparel, and the imperial standards flying. Intelligence of the

awful event, which had put so decisive, and so unexpected an end to the usurpation, was diffused with the speed of lightning through the capital. The gloom, with which it had been overspread the day before, was dispersed, as if by an enchanter's command. Every face beamed with rapturous joy. Families were seen in the streets and market-places, embracing each other, and pouring out tears of gladness. It was every where proclaimed that their beloved emperor was safe, and that he might be expected in Agra the following morning. The people seemed frantic with joy, for they venerated the house of Acbar, and loved their lawful sovereign with an enthusiasm, rendered still more intense by their hatred of the alien who had usurped his sceptre.

Couriers, on fleet Arabians, were directed by Auzeem to proceed along both banks of the Jumna, with despatches for the emperor, announcing, in a few words, what had taken place. The minister described Zeinedeen's boat so minutely, that they could hardly fail to discover it. The state galleys, drawn against the current, by trains of swift-paced elephants, and filled with those of the omrahs and house-

hold officers, who had never wavered in their allegiance, followed the couriers. The first messenger, who had the good fortune to perceive the hermit's boat just as the sun was setting, dashed into the river on horseback, directing the animal's head towards the little bark, which was quietly gliding on in its course. He held up the despatch in his right hand, waving it in triumph over his head, and shouting—"Long live the emperor!"

The glorious tidings first caught the ear of Nourmahal, whose heart swelled with measureless delight, when, kissing her imperial consort, she repeated the salutation—"Long live the emperor—my own beloved—my husband—long and triumphantly may he reign in the hearts of his people as he reigns in mine!" Jehangire, pressing her in his arms, returned the kiss tenfold.

The messenger flung the despatch into the boat as soon as he could get near enough for that purpose. It was caught by Kazim, who handed it to the emperor.

"Admirable Auzeem! Read it, my lord chancellor, and suspect no more the 'Preserver

of the empire,' as he shall henceforth be titled. Mangeli! behold the empress of Hindostan!"

The parents and the daughter were already locked in each other's arms. Their many griefs were now all merged in a flood of transport. Zeinedeen, raising his eyes to Heaven, gave, from the bottom of his soul, thanks to Heaven that he had been permitted to witness this day of happiness for his country, and of just exultation for those dear friends—his children he might call them—whose virtues had been severely tried by prosperity, as well as by adversity. Without waiting for a carpet to be spread, the emperor followed his example, and the whole party, prostrating themselves, expressed, in silent fervent prayer, their gratitude to the Omnipotent, for the transcendent blessings He was then pleased to confer upon them.

The banks of the river were speedily crowded by couriers, who arrived one after another, but whose despatches were now superfluous. They were followed by two hundred state galleys, one of which, looked upon the waters, as the sun cast his parting rays upon them, a mass

of burnished gold. Approaching Zeinedeen's boat, they formed in a circle around it, and while the men, rising from their benches, and, lifting their oars straight in the air, hailed their sovereign with enthusiastic cheers, and the bands on board joined in the beautiful national anthem, composed by Oustad Nâë, Jehangire ascended, by a ladder of golden cords, to the deck of his own galley, on which the imperial flag was immediately hoisted.

Kazim and Zeinedeen assisted Nourmahal and Mangeli to the deck, where they were received, and successively embraced by the emperor, who, directing the cheers and music to cease for a moment, and, holding Nourmahal by the right hand, proclaimed her the empress of Hindostan. The intelligence was received with cheers, again and again repeated; for her virtues, her accomplishments, and her beauty—beauty heightened by the simplicity of her prison dress, which she still wore,—had gained her the love of every man, who had a heart to recognize the charms of filial affection, combined with an exalted passion, which knew not how to descend from its throne.

The couriers, returning to the capital, diffused the tidings of the spectacle they had just witnessed, along the whole line of the Jumna. The train of barges, forming in the rear of the imperial galley, proceeded down the river, the oars moving to the sounds of martial airs. The banks were every where crowded with people, who hastened thither from the neighbouring towns and villages, holding in their hands torches of pinewood, which gave to the darkening night almost the splendor of day. Myriads of small fishing boats were launched on the river, occupying it almost from bank to bank, at a short distance behind the courtly procession.

As the day approached, boats of every description were seen coming from the capital, filled with gaily dressed parties, anxious to pay their homage to the emperor and empress, who appeared on the deck of their galley, and received the congratulations of the joyous people in the most endearing manner. The beauty of Nourmahal was the theme of every tongue, and never did that noble being look more captivating than when thus beside him, whom she loved so well, fanned by the fresh zephyrs of

the summer morning, and arrayed in a plain muslin robe and turban, the work of her own fingers, she stood under the flag of Hindostan.

As soon as the crowds moving down the river were observable from the tower of the citadel, the signal was given to the artillery. The guns summoned from the city and its extensive suburbs, all their vast population. The gates of the citadel were flung wide open; the great square was in a moment filled with the exulting multitude, whose incessant shouts, amidst the thunders of the ramparts and the music of a hundred bands, proclaimed the universal gladness that prevailed.

Upon arriving at the steps which led from the Jumna to the palace, the emperor beheld Auzeem waiting to receive him. Jehangire summoned him on board, and without permitting him to kneel, warmly embraced him, and immediately invested him with the title of "Preserver of the Empire." In paying his homage to Nourmahal, Auzeem expressed to her the sincerity of his joy, that she was now in the station to which it had long been his hope that he would be instrumental in raising her.

Kazim and Mangeli poured out their gratitude to him for his services to their family and their country; the chancellor, by the pressure of his hand upon his heart, rather than by any words, telling him how truly penitent he felt for having, even during a single hour, entertained the slightest suspicions of the minister's unabated zeal for the welfare of Jehangire.

The debarkation of the emperor and his consort took place under fresh salutes of artillery from all parts of the capital. Upon surmounting the steps, which were spread with cloth of gold, they beheld the whole line before them strewed with flowers; on each side were ranged the daughters of the faithful omrahs, arrayed in white robes, their heads crowned with chaplets. Behind these beauteous maidens stood their fathers, many of them of venerable age, weeping with joy for having witnessed the restoration of their lawful sovereign, of whose cause they had almost despaired.

Jehangire and Nourmahal walked, hand-in-hand, along this fragrant path, to the palace, where officers were in attendance with the imperial vestments. Immediately proceeding to the Am-kas, the emperor and his consort as-

cended the throne, the former wearing his crown. He was followed by pages bearing upon a cushion another diadem, which he placed on the brow of Nourmahal, amidst repeated bursts of acclamation from the vast assembly below. They spent a great part of the day in receiving the petitions of the people—petitions, unhappily filled with the most afflicting narratives of the wrongs sustained by every class of the community during the usurpation.

It is needless to add, that the chancellor was speedily restored to the eminent station which he had so long dignified by his virtues, and adorned by his talents. His re-appearance in the supreme court of justice was hailed with a degree of enthusiasm, scarcely secondary to that with which the restoration of the lawful sovereign was rendered so memorable in the annals of the capital.

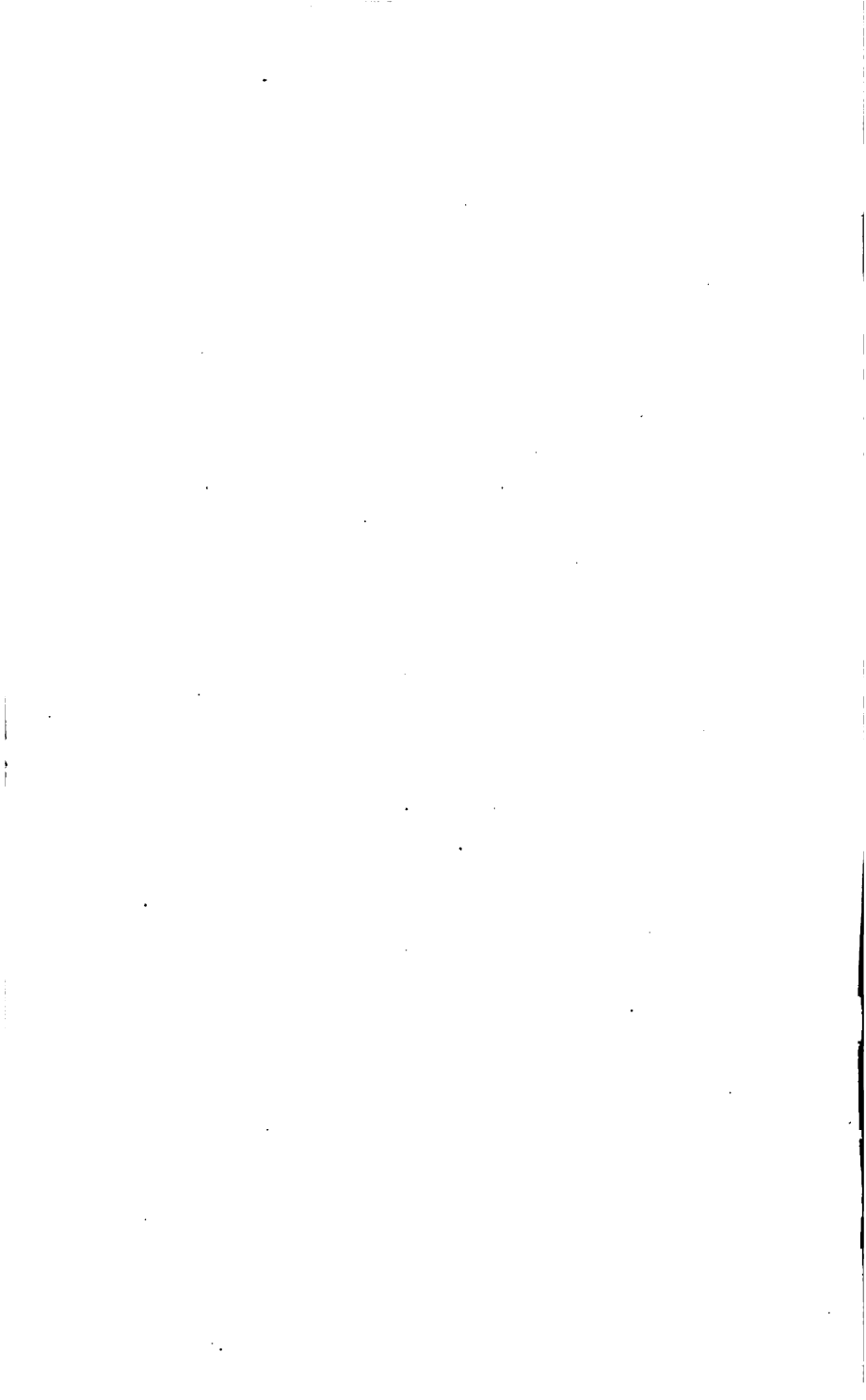
Zeinedeen contemplated all these unlooked-for changes with a sanguine delight, which he would not, for the present at least, suffer to be clouded in his mind by presages of those changes to which all human happiness is liable. He made no effort to explore the future history of Hindostan, contented that he saw, in the

ascendancy which Nourmahal appeared already to exercise over the mind of the emperor, a powerful corrective of any defects which might have weakened his authority, and prepared fresh troubles for his reign. It was too much to hope, that the remaining years of that reign should be altogether free from vicissitude; but from the united talents and power of the empress and her father, he expected, with little fear of disappointment, that their influence would ensure to Hindostan many years of felicity.

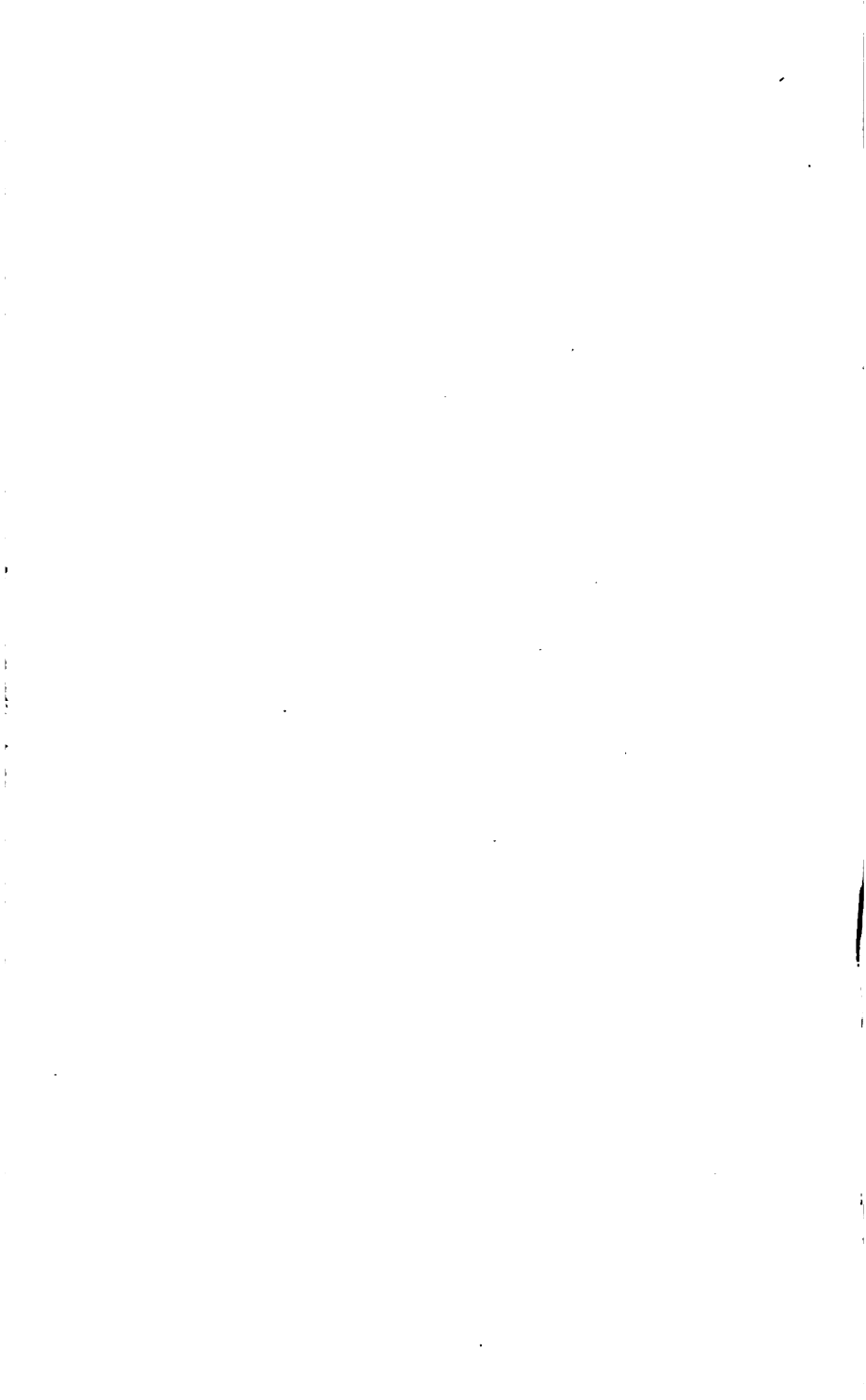
For himself, Zeinedeen had now no further desire, except to return to Cashmere, and to devote the evening of his life to the religious and philosophical contemplations, that would best prepare him for the brighter worlds, to which he looked forward with so much ardour. Jehangire, however, would not hear of any plan, which would remove the good hermit from the neighbourhood of Agra. It was arranged, therefore, that a monastery should be constructed within a short distance of the capital, upon the banks of the Jumna, which Aquaviva and his companions should be invited to occupy; that in their sacred society, Zeine-

deen should spend his remaining years ; and that thither Jehangire, Nourmahal, Kazim, and Mangeli, should often repair, to talk over the events by which they had been bound together in links of sympathy, never to be solved at this side of the grave, and to renew their thanksgivings to the Omnipotent, in those beautiful forms of prayer furnished so abundantly by the ritual of the missionaries.

THE END.



NOTES.



NOTES TO VOLUME I.

Page 1.

The great chain of the Himalas divides Northern from Southern Asia. Parallel to this chain, on the northern side, runs another considerable range, called the Ice Mountains. These two ranges are connected by a third, which commencing near Hindu-Kush, in the Himalas, proceeds northward, and revives again beyond the Ice Mountains. This third range, after it passes the Ice Mountains, goes under the name of the Hills of Arjun.



Page 23.

The *Indian* pink indicates the country of its birth. We have scarcely a flower, or a fruit, in Europe, which does not flourish in Asia, as in its native place.

Page 145.

This account of the birth of the infant, afterwards called Nourmahal, is almost strictly historical.

Page 149.

Our travellers in the East have made the phenomena of the "Mirage of the Desert," familiar to every body. Mr. George Robinson, whose tour in Palestine and Syria (recently published by Mr. Colburn), written in a most unpretending style, gives the best account I have ever read of those highly interesting countries, thus speaks of a *moonlight* mirage, which he observed on his way from Damascus to Aleppo:—"Soon after quitting the khan (it was still moonlight), I inquired of my guide the name of some water, which I fancied I saw in the plain of the East. The inquiry produced a laugh amongst my hearers. They told me that what I took to be water, was nothing more than the bed of a salt lake, the water of which, evaporating in summer, leaves an incrustation of salt on the earth. It was either this, or a mirage of the moon, which produced the delusion on the sight. On my arrival at Aleppo, I mentioned the circumstance to a gentleman who had frequently performed the journey from thence to Bagdad, and had, therefore, more than once observed the latter phenomenon in the desert. On one occasion, he had actually alighted from his camel, to fill his cup with the water he thought he saw before him, ere he discovered his error."—*Travels in Palestine and Syria, by George Robinson, Esq.*, vol. ii. p. 236.

NOTES TO VOLUME II.

Page 9.

Jehangire has left behind a very curious auto-biographical fragment, which has been translated by Major David Price, and published by the Oriental Translation Committee—a body of distinguished persons, to whom the country is much indebted for many publications of great interest and value. In these “Memoirs” the emperor thus speaks of Indragui:—

“Among my brother’s elephants devolved to me on the occasion was one of which I could not but express the greatest admiration, and to which I gave the name of Indraguj (*the elephant of India*). It was of a size I never before beheld: such as to get upon its back required a ladder of fourteen steps. It was of a disposition so gentle and tractable, that under its most furious excitements, if an infant unwarily threw itself in its way, it would lay hold of it with its trunk, and place it out of danger with the utmost care and tenderness. The animal was, at the same time, of such unparalleled speed and activity, that

the fleetest horse was not able to keep up with it; and such was its courage, that it would attack, with perfect readiness, an hundred of the fiercest of its kind. Such, in other respects, although it may appear in some degree tedious to dwell upon the subject, were indeed the qualities of this noble and intelligent quadruped, that I assigned a band of music to attend upon it, and it was always preceded by a company of forty spearmen."—*Memoirs*, &c., p. 62.

Page 39.

Bernier, in his amusing account of the Mogul Empire, mentions the fountain of Send Brare. In the month of May, he says, when the melting of the snows on the mountains of Cashmere has taken place, the fountain flows and ebbs three times a-day—at the dawn, at noon, and at night. After the lapse of fifteen days the fountain becomes dry, and so remains until the same month in the following year. During the period of its ebbing and flowing, pilgrims, he says, flocked from all parts to purify themselves in the sacred spring, and to perform their devotions in the temple that stood near it. The general belief in the efficacy of the fountain to distribute the flowery messengers cast into it, is stated by Abul Fazeel in his account of Cashmere. See the *Ayeen Akberry*, vol. ii. p. 127. London. 1800.

Page 41.

Bernier states, that on the summit of Pees-Punchal (from which a view of Cashmere is first obtained by travellers from India) there lived in the time of Jehangire a hermit, who was reputed to be a great worker of miracles. He was said to have the power of raising all sorts of storms. His white uncombed beard, extremely long and bushy, gave him a remarkably savage aspect. He imposed a species of toll on all persons passing the top of the mountain. He forbade them to make the least noise during their progress, threatening them with tempest if they dared to violate his mandate. Jehangire, according to Bernier, when passing the mountain, in defiance of the hermit's injunction, ordered the kettle-drums to beat, and the trumpets to be sounded, the consequence of which was, a furious tempest that menaced destruction to his whole army. The phenomenon is, in fact, consistent with the meteorological history of the Alps, where the concussions caused in the atmosphere, by the discharge even of a pistol, are known to have been attended with considerable danger.

Page 62.

The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah was not limited to those two cities. It is very well known, that in several parts of the east, towns have been inhumed, either by the agency of the tempest or the earthquake. It is not improbable that excavations, rightly directed in that region, would bring to light more than one Herculaneum.

Page 83.

In the memoirs of Jehangire, already alluded to, the operations of the Bauzigurs are related at considerable length. The imperial author prefaces his account of them in these words:—

“At the period of which I am about to speak there were to be found, in the province of Bengal, performers in slight-of-hand, or jugglers, of such unrivalled skill in their art, that I have thought a few instances of their extraordinary dexterity not unworthy of a place in these memorials. On one occasion, in particular, there came to my court *seven* of these men, who confidently boasted that they were capable of producing effects so strange as far to surpass the scope of the human understanding: and most certainly, when they proceeded to their operations, they exhibited in their performances things of so extraordinary a nature, as without the actual demonstration the world would not have conceived possible; such, indeed, as cannot but be considered among the most surprising circumstances of the age in which we live.”—*Memoirs, &c.* p. 96.

The imperial author, after enumerating the performances of the Bengalese, concludes with the following observations:—

“In very truth, however we may have bestowed upon these performances the character of trick or juggle, they very evidently partake of the nature of something beyond the exertion of human energy; at all events, such performances were executed with inimitable skill, and if there were in the execution any thing of facility, what

should prevent their accomplishment by a man of ordinary capacity? I have heard it stated, that the art has been called the Semnanian (perhaps *asmaunian*, 'celestial'), and I am informed that it is also known and practised to a considerable extent among the nations of Europe. It may be said, indeed, that there exists in some men a peculiar and essential faculty, which enables them to accomplish things far beyond the ordinary scope of human exertion, such as frequently to baffle the utmost subtilty of the understanding to penetrate."—*Memoirs, &c.* p. 104.

Page 111.

May I confess that the portrait of Purveis, painted in the text, was literally copied from a child of my own,—the delight of my heart,—my only boy, who was standing at my knee while I wrote that page? He was then little more than five years old, a model of meekness, beauty, and affection. His intellect already gave promises of superiority, which I dare not enumerate. The sheet containing that passage had scarcely passed through the press, when a sudden blight—one of those awful dispensations of Providence, into which we cannot presume to enquire—descended upon my flower, and withered it almost in an instant. On the Wednesday, our beloved Edward was the joy of his home—all life and loveliness;—on the Monday, he was in his shroud.

Page 115.

Jehangire's decrees against drinking wine, are thus mentioned in his "Memoirs :"—

"No person was permitted either to make or sell either wine or any other kind of intoxicating liquor. I undertook to institute this regulation, although it is sufficiently notorious that I have myself the strongest inclination for wine, in which from the age of sixteen I have liberally indulged. And in very truth, encompassed as I was with youthful associates of congenial minds, breathing the air of a delicious climate—ranging through lofty and splendid saloons, every part of which decorated with all the graces of painting and sculpture, and the floors bespread with the richest carpets of silk and gold, would it not have been a species of folly to have rejected the aid of an exhilarating cordial—and what cordial can surpass the juice of the grape?"—*Memoirs, &c.* p. 6.

The imperial author is very frank upon the subject of his own excesses; but promises to give them up *some time or another*.

"For myself, I cannot but acknowledge that such was the excess to which I had carried my indulgence, that my usual daily allowance extended to twenty, and sometimes to more than twenty cups, each cup containing half a seir (about six ounces), and eight cups being equal to a maunn of Irak. So far, indeed, was this baneful propensity carried, that if I were but an hour without my beverage, my hands began to shake, and I was unable to sit at rest. Convinced by these symptoms, that if the habit

gained upon me in this proportion my situation must soon become one of the utmost peril, I felt it full time to devise some expedient to abate the evil: and in six months I accordingly succeeded in reducing my quantity gradually from twenty to five cups a day. At entertainments I continued, however, to indulge in a cup or two more: and on most occasions I made it a rule never to commence my indulgence until about two hours before the close of the day. But now that the affairs of the empire demand my utmost vigilance and attention, my potations do not commence until after the hour of evening prayer, my quantity never exceeding five cups on any occasion; neither would more than that quantity suit the state of my stomach. Once a day I take my regular meal, and once a day seems quite sufficient to assuage my appetite for wine; but as drink seems not less necessary than meat for the sustenance of man, it appears very difficult, if not impossible, for me to discontinue altogether the use of wine. Nevertheless, I bear in mind, and I trust in heaven that, like my grandfather Homayun, who succeeded in divesting himself of the habit before he attained to the age of forty-five, I also may be supported in my resolution, some time or other to abandon the pernicious practice altogether. 'In a point wherein God has pronounced his sure displeasure, let the creature exert himself ever so little towards amendment, and it may prove, in no small degree, the means of eternal salvation.'" *Memoirs, &c.* p. 6, 7.

Page 118.

Captain Hawkins (in "Purchas," vol. i. p. 222,) gives the following quaint sketch of the routine of the emperor's life, from his own observation :—

"First in the morning, about the break of day, he is at his beads, with his face turned to the westward. The manner of his praying, when he is at Agra, is in a private fair room, upon a goodly jet stone, having only a Persian lamb-skin under him : having also some eight chains of beads, every one of them containing four hundred. The beads are of rich pearl, ballace rubies, diamonds, emeralds, lignum aloes, Eshem, and coral. At the upper end of this jet stone, the pictures of Our Lady and Christ are placed, graven in stone : so he turneth over his beads, and saith three thousand two hundred words, according to the number of his beads, and then his prayer is ended. After he hath done, he sheweth himself to the people, receiving their salaams—unto him multitudes do resort every morning for this purpose. This done, he sleepeth two hours more, and then dineth and passeth his time with his women, and at noon he sheweth himself to the people again, sitting till three of the clock, viewing and seeing his pastimes and sports made by men, and fighting of many sorts of beasts—every day sundry kinds of pastime. Then at three o'clock all the nobles in general (that be in Agra, and are well) resort unto the court, the king coming forth in open audience, sitting in his seat royal, and every man standing in his degree before him ; his chiefest sort of nobles standing within a red rail, and

the rest without. They are all placed by his lieutenant-general. This red rail is three steps higher than the place where the rest stand, and within this red rail I was placed among the chiefest of all. The rest are placed by officers, and they likewise be within an outer very spacious place, railed; and without that rail stand all sorts of horsemen and soldiers, that belong unto his captains, and all other comers. At these rails there are many porters, who have white rods to keep men in order. In the midst of the place, right before the king, standeth one of his sheriffes, together with his master-hangman, who is accompanied with forty hangmen, wearing on their heads a certain quilted cap, different from all others, with an hatchet on their shoulders; and others, with all sorts of whips, being there ready to do what the king commandeth. The king heareth all causes in this place, and stayeth some two hours every day. (These kings sit daily in justice, and on the Tuesdays do their devotions.) Then he departeth towards his private place of prayer. His prayer being ended, four or five sorts of very well dressed and roasted meats are brought him, of which, as he pleaseth he eateth a little to stay his stomach, drinking once of his strong drink. Then he cometh forth into a private room, where none can come but such as himself nominateth. (For two years together I was one of his attendants here.) In this place he drinketh other five cupfulls, which is the portion that the physicians allot him. This done, he eateth opium, and then he ariseth; and being in the height of his drink, he layeth him down to sleep, every man departing to his own home. And after he hath slept two

hours, they awake him, and bring his supper to him, at which time he is not able to feed himself; but it is thrust into his mouth by others, and this is about one of the clock, and then he sleepeth the rest of the night."

Page 119.

Jehangire gives a similar account of the visit of Oustad Nâc, in his "Memoirs."

Page 138.

The emperor's visit to this hermit, is mentioned in his "Memoirs."

Page 146.

The wealth of the collector, and his acts of tyranny, as well as his punishment, are recorded by Jehangire in his "Memoirs."

Page 149.

The emperor thus speaks of this Mogul merchant in his "Memoirs:"—

"A certain Moghûl had resided for some time in the place, employed, as was supposed, in the pursuit of some commercial concern; and he was, it seems, in the habit of inviting such females as he observed to be addicted to liquor, to meet him in some of the gardens in the vicinity, where he told them they would find and experience from him such a reception as would surpass their most luxurious expectations.

“The women thus invited, usually arrayed themselves in their richest ornaments, and thus repaired to the place of appointment; where, as it afterwards appeared, it was the practice of the villain first to reduce them to a state of intoxication, and then to murder and strip them of their ornaments, with which he returned to his own residence. This he was permitted to continue for many a week, until he had, by these nefarious means, contrived to amass treasure to the amount of five-and-forty thousand tomauns.”*—*Memoirs, &c.* p. 118.

Page 287.

We find the following curious passage in the “Memoirs of Jehangire.”

“While I remained in the precincts of Delhy, at the period to which I shall now return, they described to me a species of feathered game, with tails of a particular description, and the flesh of which was of a flavour in the highest degree delicious. But what more particularly attracted my curiosity was, that they spoke a language known to none but to the natives of Kashmeir, who, by using a sort of note or call, took from them the power of flight; and who were thus able to catch them by thousands at a time. On a plain in the neighbourhood, frequented by

* At thirty-three rupees to the tomaun, this would be about fourteen lacs and eighty-five thousand rupees, or about 150,000*l.*

thousands of these birds in a flock, by way of experiment, I employed about a thousand of the Kashmeirians accustomed to the business, to give me a proof of their skill, and I attended in person to view the sport. As had been represented to me, about twenty of the Kashmeirians collected together, and produced a sort of murmuring sound, which, attracting the attention of these birds, they were drawn by degrees within such a distance of the men, that they were taken in entire flocks. My pity was greatly moved by the reflection that these harmless birds should have fallen victims to this sort of treachery; that they should have been betrayed into the hands of the destroyer by their irresistible love of harmonious sounds, and that I should be found capable of consigning them to slaughter from a mere idle and vicious curiosity; the next day, therefore, I caused the whole, to the number of twenty thousand birds which had been taken on the occasion, to be set at liberty. My object was obtained in witnessing the fact; but to have seen them slaughtered would have bespoken a want of compassion foreign to my nature."—*Memoirs, &c.* p. 132.

Page 290.

The Rawil, Kuhy, or Laughing crows, assemble in numbers of from twenty to fifty in the forests, and make a noise closely resembling many persons laughing together. The plumage of the back, wings, and sides, is of an olive brown; the tail of umber brown. The head is ornamented with an elevated crest of rounded feathers. A black line

passes from the base of the beak, through the eyes, and occupies the ear coverts. Excepting this black mark the whole of the head, throat, and breast, are white. The feathers of the crest, as they approach the occiput, appear as if slightly washed with Indian ink. The whole of this white space is bounded by a band of rufous, which loses itself in the olive brown of the rest of the body.

NOTES TO VOLUME III.

Page 249.

Jehangire's admiration of Eastern tales, was in keeping with his fondness for wonders of every description. He relates, in his "Memoirs," a story which he states was told to him by a native of Arabia. It might be well included in a new edition of the "Arabian Nights:"—

"I shall here take upon me to relate, that once upon a time a native of Arabia, who had passed the age of forty, was brought to the metropolis for the purpose of being presented to me. When introduced to my presence, I observed that he had lost his arm close to the shoulder, and it occurred to me to ask him whether this was his condition from his birth, or whether it was an injury which he had received in battle. He seemed considerably embarrassed by the question; but stated that the accident which had deprived him of his arm was attended with circumstances so very extraordinary, as to be rather beyond credibility, and might perhaps expose him to some degree of ridicule: he had therefore made a vow never to de-

scribe it. On my importuning him further, however, and urging that there could exist no reason for concealment compatible with what he owed me for my protection, he finally relented, and related what follows :

“ When I was about the age of fifteen, it happened to me to accompany my father on a voyage to India ; and at the expiration of about sixty days, during which we had wandered in different directions through the ocean, we were assailed by a storm so dreadful, as to be for ever impressed upon my recollection. For three days and three nights successively, it raged with such indescribable fury, the sea rose in such tremendous surges, the rain descended in such torrents, and the peals of thunder accompanied by lightning so incessant, as to be terrific in the utmost degree. To complete the horrors of our situation, the ship's mast, which was as large in compass as two men with arms extended could encircle, snapped in the middle, and falling upon the deck, destroyed many of the crew. The vessel was therefore on the very verge of foundering ; but the tempest subsiding at the close of the third day, we were for the present preserved from destruction, although we were driven far from the course which led to the port of our destination.

“ When, however, the ship had for some days been pursuing this uncertain course, we came in sight, unexpectedly, of what appeared to be a lofty mountain in the midst of the ocean ; and as we neared the spot it was soon ascertained to be an island, covered with numerous buildings, and interspersed with trees and river streams in most agreeable variety. Our stock of water in the ship was

nearly exhausted, and we therefore steered close in land; and from certain fishermen, who were out in their boats, we now learnt that the island was in possession of the Portuguese Franks; that it was extremely populous, and that there were no Mussulman inhabitants; moreover, that they had no intercourse with strangers.

“To be as brief as possible: as soon as the ship had reached the anchoring ground and dropped her anchor, a Portuguese captain and another officer came on board; and instantly, without leaving even an infant child to take care of the ship, conveyed the whole of the ship’s company, passengers and all, in boats to the shore; desiring, at the same time, that we might not be under any apprehensions, for that as soon as it could be discovered that there was among us a person that suited a particular purpose, which they did not choose to explain, that one alone would be detained, and the others dismissed without injury. The port being theirs, and ourselves entirely at their mercy, we were compelled to submit to all they said; and accordingly the whole ship’s company, merchants, slaves; and mariners, to the number of twelve hundred persons, were all crowded into one house.

“From thence they sent for us one by one alternately, and stripping us stark-naked, one of their hakeims, or physicians, proceeded to make the minutest examination of our bodies, in every muscle, vein, and limb, telling each respectively, after undergoing such examination, that he was at liberty to go about his business. This they continued to do until it came to the turn of myself and a brother who was with us; and what was our dismay and

horror when, after the described examination, the hakeim delivered us into the custody of some of the people in attendance, with orders to place us behind the curtain ; that is, where we should not be open to human intercourse. With the exception of my brother and myself, the whole of the ship's company, on whose bodies they failed to discover the marks of which they were in search, were now dismissed. Neither could my father, either by tears or remonstrances succeed in diverting them from their purpose ; to his repeated demands to know in what his sons could have offended, that out of a ship's company of twelve hundred persons they alone should be detained, they replied only by a frown, utterly disregarding every entreaty.

“They now conveyed my brother and myself to a part of the place where they lodged us in separate chambers, opposite, however, to each other. Every morning they brought us for food fowl kabaubs, honey, and white bread, and this continued for the space of ten days. At the expiration of that period the naokhoda (or commander of the ship), demanded permission to proceed on his voyage. My father implored that he would delay his departure, if it were only for two or three days longer, when, peradventure, the Portuguese might be induced to give up his sons. He presented himself to the ruler of the port, and again, by the most humble entreaties endeavoured to obtain our release, but in vain.

“The same medical person, on whose report we were detained, now came with ten other Franks to the house or chamber where my brother was confined, and again strip-

ping him naked, they laid him on his back on a board or table, where he was exposed to the same manual examination as before. They then left him and came to me, and stretching me out on a board in the same manner and plight, again examined my body in every part as before. Again they returned to my brother; for, from the situation of our prisons, the doors being exactly opposite, I could distinctly observe all that passed. They sent for a large bowl and a knife, and placing my brother, with his head over the bowl,—his cries and supplications all in vain,—they struck him over the mouth, and with the knife actually severed his head from the body, both the head and his blood being received in the bowl. When the bleeding had ceased, they took away the bowl of blood, which they immediately poured into a pot of boiling oil, brought for the purpose, stirring the whole together with a ladle, until both blood and oil became completely amalgamated. Will it be believed, that after this they took the head, and again fixing it exactly to the body, they continued to rub the adjoining parts with the mixture of blood and oil, until the whole had been applied. They left my brother in this state, closed the door, and went their way.

“At the expiration of three days from this, they sent for me from my place of confinement, and telling me that they had obtained, at my brother’s expense, all that was necessary to their purpose, they pointed out to me the entrance to a place under ground, which they said was the repository of gold and jewels to an incalculable amount. Thither they informed me I was to descend, and that I might bring away for myself as much of the contents as I

had strength to carry. At first I refused all belief to their assertions, conceiving that doubtless they were about to send me where I was to be exposed to some tremendous trial; but as their importunities were too well enforced, I had no alternative but submission.

“I entered the opening which led to the passage, and having descended a flight of stairs, about fifty steps, I discovered four separate chambers. In the first chamber, to my utter surprise, I beheld my brother apparently restored to perfect health. He wore the dress and habiliments of the Ferengues, or Portuguese,—had on his head a cap of the same people, profusely ornamented with pearl and precious stones,—a sword, set with diamonds, by his side, and a staff, similarly enriched, under his arm. My surprise was not diminished when the moment he observed me I saw him turn away from me, as if under feelings of the utmost disgust and disdain. I became so alarmed at a reception so strange and unaccountable, that although I saw that it was my own brother, the very marrow in my bones seemed to have been turned into cold water. I ventured, however, to look into the second chamber, and there I beheld heaps upon heaps of diamonds and rubies, and pearls and emeralds, and every other description of precious stones, thrown one on the other in astonishing profusion. The third chamber into which I looked contained, in similar heaps, an immense profusion of gold; and the fourth chamber was strewed middle deep with silver.

“I had some difficulty in determining to which of these glittering deposits I should give the preference. At last I recollected that a single diamond was of greater value

than all the gold I could gather into my robe, and I accordingly decided on tucking up my skirts and filling them with jewels. I put out my hand in order to take up some of these glittering articles, when from some invisible agent, perhaps it was the effect of some overpowering effluvia, I received a blow so stunning, that I found it impossible to stand in the place any longer. In my retreat, it was necessary to pass the chamber in which I had seen my brother. The instant he perceived me about to pass, he drew his sword, and made a furious cut at me. I endeavoured to avoid the stroke by suddenly starting aside, but in vain; the blow took effect, and my right arm dropped from the shoulder-joint. Thus wounded and bleeding, I rushed from this deposit of treasure and horror, and at the entrance above, found the physician and his associates, who had so mysteriously determined the destiny of my unhappy brother. Some of them went below, and brought away my mutilated arm; and having closed up the entrance, with stone and mortar, conducted me, together with my arm, all bleeding as I was, to the presence of the Portuguese governor, men, and women, and children, flocking to the doors to behold the extraordinary spectacle.

“The wound in my shoulder continued to bleed; but having received from the governor a compensation of three thousand tomauns, a horse, with jewelled caparison, a number of beautiful female slaves, and many males, with the promise of future favour in reserve, the Portuguese physician was ordered to send for me, and applying some styptic preparation to the wound it quickly healed, and so

perfectly, that it might be said I was thus armless from my birth. I was then dismissed, and having shortly afterwards obtained a passage in another ship, in about a month from my departure reached the port for which I was destined.

“On the above relation,” continues our imperial memorialist, “I have to observe, that in all probability the extraordinary circumstances to which it refers were effected through the operations of chimia (‘alchemy’), known to be extensively practised among the Franks, and in which the jugglers from Bengal appear to have been very well instructed.”

Page 264.

Nitocris, an Egyptian queen of great beauty, revenged herself for the death of her brother and predecessor on the throne in a similar manner. “On her accession, she invited those whom she suspected of being privy to his murder, to a festival. A large subterraneous hall was prepared for the occasion; and though it had the appearance of being fitted up with a view to celebrate the proposed feast, it was, in reality, designed for a very different purpose; for, when the guests were assembled, the water of the Nile was introduced by a secret canal into the apartment; and thus, by their death, she gratified her revenge, without giving them an opportunity of suspecting her designs.”—See Mr. Wilkinson’s *Manners and Customs of the Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 91. London, Murray. 1838. This work appears to be the result of infinite labour and research.

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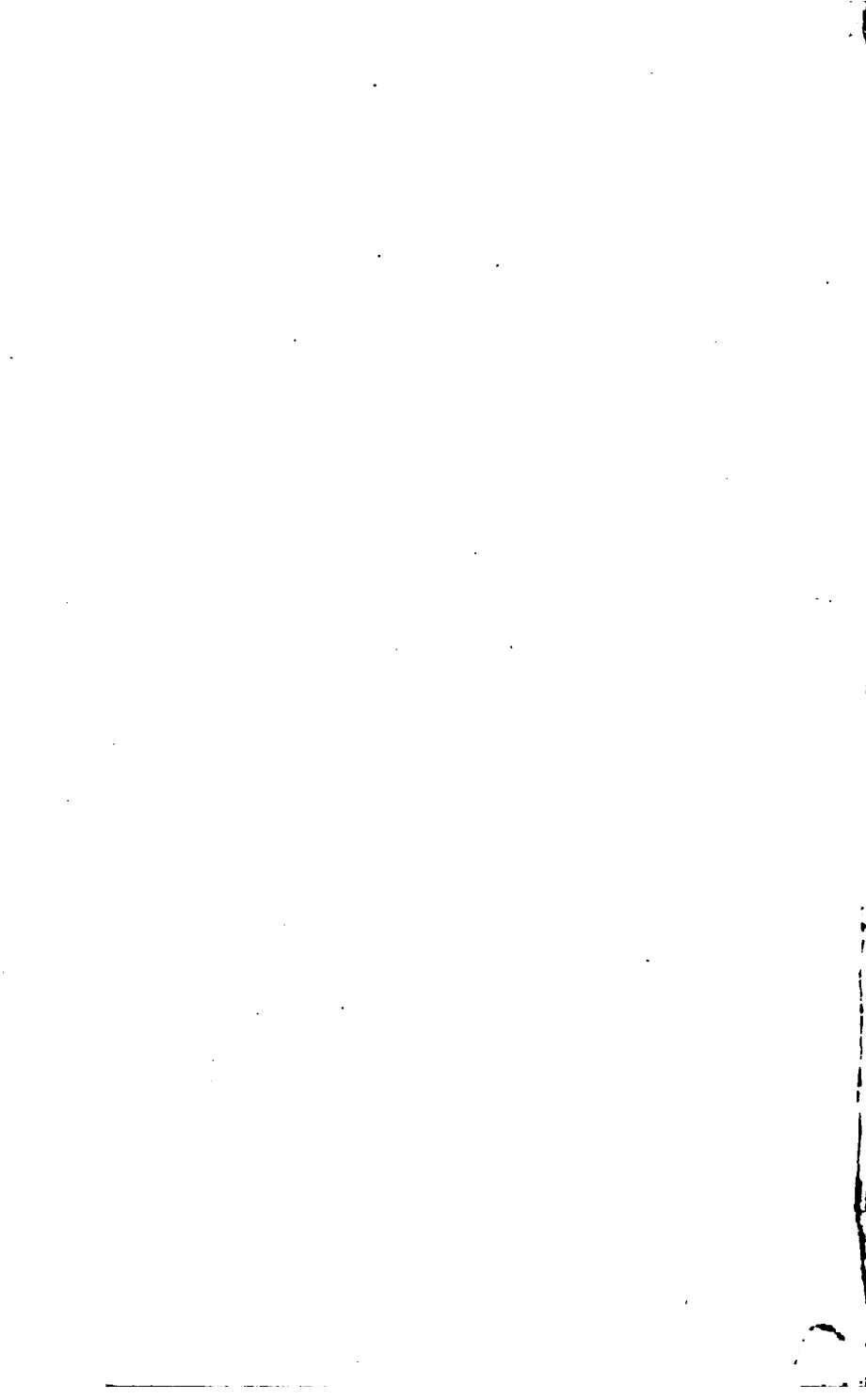
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